Week ending March 28 1953
Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

Brilliant new HERCULE POIROT mystery
by AGATHA CHRISTIE

I LEARN TO LIVE IN TWILIGHT: A moving personal record of the approach of blindness

"Smooth" IS THE KEY WORD

says Mr. WILFRID WHITE,

seen here on Talisman. At Helsinki last year, his two almost faultless rounds on Nizefella contributed to Britain's final victory in the Prix des Nations.

From the smooth combination of horse and rider . . .

"In show-jumping," says Wilfrid White, "horse and rider must operate as one *smooth* team. A firm seat, light hands and perfect judgement of speed and distance are certainly essential, but only when there is complete confidence and *smooth* co-operation between horse and rider can winning standards be achieved."

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Smooth to the lips... *Smooth* to the taste... *Smooth* to the throat...

EDITORIAL

Those roads!

THIS Easter and summer will be the slowest and most crowded ever on our highways. And practically nothing is being done about it, says the President of the Institute of Transport, Mr. Christopher Brunner.

With nearly five million motor vehicles on its 184,837 miles of road, Great Britain has the densest traffic of any country in the world.

And our roads are wearing out. Waste in time, petrol, goods and money grows every day.

ROAD FUND licences and other transport taxes produce £370 million this year. But less than a quarter of this is being spent on the upkeep of the roads. Only two millions of it go to provide new roads.

Present arrears in maintenance are £200 million.

Advance schemes approved by Parliament for a ten-year plan to improve trunk roads and build eight motorways have been shelved. A Ministry of Transport official says: "The reason is purely financial."

MR. BRUNNER
An unanswerable case . . .

BUT Brunner declares: "The cost of building new roads and improving old would be less than the money now wasted because of accidents, delays, wear and tear on vehicles, and heavy fuel consumption.

"For some two-thirds of its length A1, the Great North Road, can carry only one line of traffic in each direction.

"When we consider the unsuitability of so many of our roads for modern traffic, it is not surprising that there were five thousand deaths last year from accidents on them. Death cannot be kept off the kind of roads we have in Britain. That is the sober truth."

LAST year, 12.5 per cent of the national income was spent on movement by road. The bill for moving goods was £540 million.

Lorry traffic, which has doubled since the war, is still growing.

With all this, the need for urgent action grows.

"Where modern types of road have been built, experience shows that accidents can be reduced by two out of three; journey times can be reduced, even halved; and transport costs can be cut by up to a third," says Mr. Brunner.

Any one of these reasons for going ahead with new roads designed for modern traffic would be compelling enough.

Together they should be irresistible.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

ARTIST Fred Laurent does most of his work at home in Eastbourne, where he often finds ideas for his paintings. He could not have done this one at any other season, for his small daughters help their mother in the house only in the winter; living by the sea, they find plenty to do out of doors in the summer. Laurent himself has little to say in domestic arrangements. "That is," he adds, "so long as no one tries to tidy my studio when my back is turned."

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Was sawn in two by stomach pain.
TWO RENNIES (for a quick encore)
Soon brought him to himself once more.

Wizard trial size packet—4d.

Just suck two Rennies slowly, like sweets—and suddenly you'll realise that the pain is gone! If Rennies don't relieve your indigestion, it's high time you saw a doctor. Trial size 4d. Other sizes available everywhere at 2/10d., 1/7d., and 10d.

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For shaving—the wetter the better. That is why Corvette contains a 'wetting agent' that makes water *wetter*. It does this by reducing its surface tension so that it penetrates to every separate hair of your stubble and clings closely to each bristle. You can use *less* Corvette and get *more* softening action. For a better shave use Corvette.

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FREE SPEECH

How parents upset young patients

AS A HOSPITAL NURSE, I see some drawbacks in the Ministry of Health's instruction that parents should be able to visit their children every day. In my experience, many children settle down quite happily to hospital routine, especially if they are in a ward with other children.

One little boy we had was an ideal patient from the moment he was admitted. He chatted gaily, and took his medicine without fuss. Then came visiting day, and his mother. She began by asking him if "they" had been hurting him, and if he had missed her. It took hours to settle him down after she had gone. By all means let parents see their children daily, but it seems to me that the parents should be told how to co-operate to make the young patients' stay in hospital as pleasant as possible. — MISS G. W., London, S.W.1.

Preview Of School

WHEN a child nears school age in our village, he or she is invited along to meet the teacher and his future schoolmates. This happened to my son, and he is eagerly looking forward to starting school after Easter. What might have been an ordeal now holds no terrors for him. — MRS. ELSIE HOWE, Manor Farm Cottage, Bringhurst, Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

Spiral Heating

FOR years my wife nagged me to buy a new grate for the living-room. Now that we have one, she still complains that her back is cold. As central heating is out of the question, I am devising a special chair, hung from the ceiling and rotating slowly in front of the fire.—H. J. B., Newport, Monmouthshire.

Sharp Souvenir

AFTER treating a workman for a badly cut finger, I asked him the cause of the accident. "This," he said, and held up a jagged piece of glass. "It's my lucky charm—a piece of a bottle that launched a ship I helped to build." The glass had got into his tobacco pouch and cut him as he was filling his pipe. He insisted on keeping his memento, but I persuaded him to wrap it up—like his finger. — D. G., Warrington, Lancashire.

It's A Pleasure

RECENTLY, I took over a small, dilapidated tobacconist's shop, which had been closed for several months. I decided to test whether the old qualities of courtesy, civility and service still had any value. After the cleaning, painting and decorating were over, I greeted my first customer with a cheery: "Good morning. What can I do for you, sir?" The surprise on his face could hardly be concealed. I followed this up with a pleasant: "Thank you very much" as he left the shop. By repeating this with every customer, I have built up a steady custom in two months. I number many new and valued friends among my customers and find, to my surprise, that business is indeed a pleasure.—MRS. M. C., Edinburgh.

Unwanted Amenities

YOUR editorial, "Country Life" (JOHN BULL, March 7) interested me greatly because I was brought up in a country cottage with no piped water or main drainage. The sanitary inspector recently called on my mother and asked if she wanted a main water supply. "Why, of course," she replied, "what an unnecessary question!" But he told her that many villagers do not want modern amenities, since they might increase the rates.—W. E. BOXALL, Folkestone Road, Dover, Kent.

The Gay Old Days

OLDER people are often lecturing the "younger generation" on behaviour, saying that things were different in their day. But during a recent television programme featuring the Charleston, my mother innocently remarked: "That reminds me of the old days, when we used to practise the Charleston for hours at work." At work, mind you!—B. H., Luton.

Fuel From Sludge

THE oily sludge which is spoiling Britain's holiday beaches, mentioned in your leader "Beach Perils" (JOHN BULL, February 28), can be put to good use. An ex-marine engineer took over a disused building here in Oldham and obtained a contract for clearing sludge from oil-burning ships. He refined the sludge, producing a fuel oil that could be used instead of coal and coke in factory boilers. Since he began, his firm has had to find larger premises. It has a fleet of tankers collecting sludge from many ports, and supplies several cotton mills in this area with fuel oil.—W. HOWARTH, Glodwick Road, Oldham, Lancashire.

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

DEALER WHO CHASES BRIC-À-BRAC

Wilfred Greatorex tells how an American searches antique shops for "old junk" that is promptly sold in the U.S.A.

Eye-witness Artist

I HAVE been particularly impressed by Fred Laurent's brilliant illustrations to Brigadier Durnford Slater's articles on the Commandos. They are so vivid that I feel the artist must have witnessed some of the scenes.—P. V. H., Rye, Sussex.

Fred Laurent was a Commando during the war. He joined the Belgian Army in Britain in 1940, walking more than a hundred miles to Calais to escape the German invasion of Belgium, and scrambling on the last cargo boat to leave the port. After two years of frustration, he volunteered for the Commandos, and served with No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando. The Belgian troop of this unit fought in Italy and Jugoslavia, and took part in the assault on Walcheren. When Germany surrendered, Laurent found himself on the Baltic coast. He returned to Belgium for demobilization, and it was nearly a year before he managed to return to England, where he wanted to live and work. Laurent is now thirty-one, and is working in Sussex as an artist — a career he began at the age of thirteen. This week's instalment of "Commando!" starts on page fourteen.

Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

HE PAVED THE WAY FOR COMMANDO RAID

HUBERT NICOLLE, the Guernsey man who reconnoitred for the Commando attack on Guernsey in July, 1940 (JOHN BULL, March 14), paddled ashore from a submarine in a small canoe. He told me he chose a small bay called Le Jaonnet, where as a boy he had searched for gulls' eggs. Working from his own home, Nicolle got the information he wanted.

In London, Nicolle's information resulted in a change of plans, and Churchill wished to congratulate him personally; but a conference prevented the meeting, and it never took place.

The revised plans meant that the Commandos would land at Petit Port instead of Petit Bot Bay. In addition, weather conditions forced the postponement of the raid by three days.

There was no way of telling Martel and Mulholland, the two second-lieutenants who had been landed to act as guides, and they waited at Petit Bot in vain.

In London, it was decided that the two men would have no difficulty in merging themselves with the island population, and rescue attempts were postponed until the effects of the raid had died down. They made two ineffectual attempts to escape and, fearing reprisals against their families, finally gave themselves up.

In the autumn, Nicolle returned to the island, accompanied by another Guernseyman, Jimmy Symes. They sought information about German treatment of the inhabitants, and the food position.

Hubert Nicolle

Attempts to take them off by submarine failed; the Germans threatened their families, and Nicolle and Symes surrendered. The four Guernsey officers remained prisoners until the end of the war, each receiving the Military Cross. — PETER LAWRENCE, Albemarle Gardens, Ilford, Essex.

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THE DRESSING THAT ENDS DRY SCALP

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WHAT WAKES *Ronald Shiner?*

"I work a 16-hour day—what with the theatre and filming" says Ronald Shiner, star of "Top of the Form", a J. Arthur Rank Organisation release. "But I still have to be up bright and early and on the set next morning. I can't afford to be late, that's why I've got a completely dependable alarm clock — a Westclox."

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STATE EXPRESS

'THREE THREES'

CIGARETTES

20 for 3/7

★ The above show the right and wrong way to kick a dead ball. On the left, the footballer is concentrating on his kick and his right foot is close to the ball; his left knee is well over the ball and his weight is forward, thus giving him maximum power and direction. The right-hand photograph shows the player awkward and off-balance when these basic rules are ignored.

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cut the bread
Now for toast and
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"Miss Gilchrist in danger? Good heavens!" Mr Entwhistle leaned forward in some alarm. "Do you really think so?" Poirot nodded impatiently

AFTER THE FUNERAL

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

It was an affair of shocking brutality, and Poirot heard it out in silence. Then he gave his opinion

THE DEATH OF Richard Abernethie —"suddenly, at his residence"— brought eight members of his family to Enderby Hall. Mr. Entwhistle, Richard's solicitor and old friend, looked them over critically.

The younger set seemed an irresponsible lot; he felt more at home with the older generation. They hadn't changed much, though he doubted if he would have recognized Cora Lansquenet, Richard's youngest sister. Poor, tactless Cora, who had scandalized the family by running off to marry a French painter!

It was Cora who threw a bombshell into the orderly proceedings. After the will had been read, she blurted out brightly: "But—he *was* murdered, wasn't he?" A bad joke, of course: Cora loved shocking people. And yet—she had a knack of stumbling on the truth. . . .

Mr. Entwhistle was still pondering on that outrageous remark next day when the appalling news came. Cora herself had been murdered—butchered savagely with a hatchet at her little cottage in Lytchett St. Mary.

The old solicitor conferred with the police. Was there any connection between the two deaths? The only clue so far had come from genteel, twittery Miss Gilchrist, Cora's companion-help. She revealed that Richard, just before he died, had been to see Cora, and seemed to have an obsession that "people"—perhaps his own family—were trying to poison him.

Mr. Entwhistle checked that all the younger set were about their lawful business or pleasure at the time of Cora's death. Next, he wanted to see Timothy, Richard's invalid brother, and his wife, Maude. But first of all he'd ring up an old Belgian friend who had experience in these matters.

Mr. Entwhistle's friend was none other than M. Hercule Poirot.

PART 2

Timothy And Maude

"VERY good of you to come along," said Maude gruffly, as she greeted Mr. Entwhistle on the platform of Bayham Compton station. "I can assure you that both

"I've been uneasy," Helen said slowly. "At the time I felt there was something — *wrong*." Mr Entwhistle turned. "Wrong? In what way?" She shook her head. "That's just it. I don't know"

Timothy and I much appreciate it. Of course, the truth is that Richard's death was the worst thing possible for Timothy."

Mr. Entwhistle had not yet considered his friend's death from this particular angle. But it was, he saw, the only angle from which Mrs. Timothy Abernethie was likely to regard it.

As they proceeded towards the exit, Maude developed the theme.

"To begin with, it was a *shock*—Timothy was really very attached to Richard. And then unfortunately it put the idea of death into Timothy's head. Being such an invalid has made him rather nervous about himself."

As they emerged from the station, Maude led the way to a dilapidated car of almost fabulous antiquity.

"Sorry about our old rattletrap," she said. "We've wanted a new car for years, but really we couldn't afford it. I hope it will start," she added. "Sometimes one has to wind it."

MAUDE pressed the starter several times but only a meaningless whirr resulted. Mr. Entwhistle, who had never wound a car in his life, felt rather apprehensive, but Maude herself descended, inserted the starting handle and with a vigorous couple of turns woke the motor to life. It was fortunate, Mr. Entwhistle reflected, that Maude was such a powerfully built woman.

"That's that," she said. "The old brute's been playing me up lately. Did it when I was coming back after the funeral. Had to walk a couple of miles to the nearest garage and they weren't good for much—just a village affair. I had to put up at the local inn while they tinkered at it. Of course *that* upset Timothy, too. I had to phone through to him and tell him I couldn't be back till the next day. Fussed him terribly. One tries to keep things from him as much as possible—but some things one can't. Cora's murder, for instance. I had to send for Dr. Barton to give him a sedative. If I could only keep the newspapers from him! But he will insist on reading them—and then, of course, it upsets him."

They turned in through the gates of Stansfield Grange, and up a neglected drive. It had been an attractive small property once—but had now a doleful and neglected appearance.

Maude sighed as she said: "We had to let this go to seed during the war. Both gardeners called up. And now we've only got one old man, and he's not much good. Wages have gone up so terribly. I must say it's a blessing to realize that we'll be able to spend a little money on the place now. We're both so fond of it. I was really afraid that we might have to sell it. . . . Not that I suggested anything of the kind to Timothy. It would have upset him dreadfully."

They drew up before the portico of a very lovely old Georgian house which badly needed a coat of paint.

Maude led the way into the drawing-room, where tea was laid ready by the fireplace, and, establishing Mr. Entwhistle there, disappeared. She returned in a few minutes' time with a teapot and silver kettle, and proceeded to minister to Mr. Entwhistle's needs. It was a good tea with home-made cake and fresh buns.

Mr. Entwhistle murmured: "What about Timothy?" Maude explained briskly that she had taken Timothy his tray before she set out for the station.

"And now," said Maude, "he will have had his little nap, and it will be the best time for him to see you. Do try and not let him excite himself too much."

Mr. Entwhistle assured her that he would exercise every precaution.

Studying her in the flickering firelight, he was seized by a feeling of compassion. This big, stalwart, matter-of-fact woman, so healthy, so vigorous, so full of common sense, and yet so strangely, almost pitifully, vulnerable in one spot. Her love for her husband was maternal love, Mr. Entwhistle decided. Maude Abernethie had borne no child and she was a woman built for motherhood. Her invalid husband had become her child, to be shielded, guarded, watched over. And, perhaps, being the stronger character of the two, she had unconsciously imposed on him a state of invalidism greater than might otherwise have been the case.

Poor Mrs. Tim, thought Mr. Entwhistle to himself.

PEOPLE IN THE CASE

TIMOTHY ABERNETHIE—younger brother of the dead Richard Abernethie. A blustering old hypochondriac, affronted at not inheriting *all* his brother's money. Childishly dependent on *MAUDE*, his fussily devoted wife—a big, capable, tweedy woman.

HELEN ABERNETHIE—Richard's favourite; his brother Leo's widow. Fiftyish, charming and intelligent.

ROSAMUND SHANE—Richard's lovely, scatterbrained niece. With her vain, ambitious husband, *MICHAEL*, earns a precarious living from the stage.

SUSAN BANKS—Richard's other niece, who inherited his good business sense and strong personality. Married—in spite of family disapproval—to *GREGORY*, a neurotic, ineffectual chemist's assistant.

GEORGE CROSSFIELD—Richard's racy young nephew, who works for a shady firm of solicitors, and—Mr. Entwhistle suspects—has been speculating with his clients' money.

CORA LANSQUENET—Richard's youngest sister, found brutally murdered with a hatchet at her country cottage the day after the funeral, by *MISS GILCHRIST*, her twittery, old-fashioned companion-help.

TIMOTHY raised himself up in his chair as he held out a hand. "Good of you to come, Entwhistle."

He was a big man with a marked resemblance to his brother Richard. But what was strength in Richard, in Timothy was weakness. The mouth was irresolute, the chin very slightly receding, the eyes less deep-set. Lines of peevish irritability showed on his forehead.

His invalid status was emphasized by the rug across his knees and a positive pharmacopoeia of little bottles and boxes on a table at his right hand.

"I mustn't exert myself," he said warningly. "Doctor's forbidden it. Keeps telling me not to worry! Worry! If *he'd* had a murder in his family *he'd* do a bit of worrying, I bet! It's too much for a man—first Richard's death, then hearing all about his funeral and his will. What a will! And on top of that, poor little Cora killed with a hatchet. Hatchet! Ugh! No one's safe today—we're overrun with gangsters. What's the country coming to, I'd like to know? What's the damned country coming to?"

Mr. Entwhistle was familiar with this gambit. It was a question almost invariably asked sooner or later by his clients for the last twenty years and he had his routine for answering it. The non-committal words he uttered could have been classified under the heading of soothing noises.

Timothy was not soothed. "Look at the state *we're* in! Can't get a decent gardener, can't get servants—poor Maude here has to work herself to a shadow messing about in the kitchen. (By the way, I think a custard pudding would go well with the sole tonight, my dear—and perhaps a little clear soup first?) I've got to keep my strength up—Doctor Barton said so. Let me see, where was I? Oh, yes—Cora. It's a shock, I can tell you, to a man, when he hears his sister—his own sister—has been *murdered*! Why, I had palpitations for twenty minutes! You'll have to attend to everything for me, Entwhistle. *I* can't

Continued on page 24

I learn to live in twilight

by JOHN COLTMAN

After the shock of finding that I was going blind had passed, it was easier than I thought. I still run my business, and many of my staff do not know I cannot see

THE OPHTHALMIC SURGEON finished writing his notes. "I must tell you that this is very grave," he said, "and if I were in your position I should be glad to think that I was insured against loss of employment."

This blow was so much heavier than anything I had expected that it took a moment or two to sink in. I had just come back from a holiday in North Wales. The house in which I had been staying was lit from a private generating plant, eccentric in its output, so it did not surprise me that I found it much easier to read if I sat as close as possible to a lamp.

One can remain blissfully ignorant of a serious eye defect if it affects only one eye. The other eye automatically takes up the duty. So it was by accident that I first realized that the sight of my left eye had become as eccentric as the electric lighting plant. We were out for a walk when a small particle of dust blew into my right eye. While I was wiping it with my handkerchief, I suddenly realized that everything around me looked very strange. A telegraph post had apparently developed a semi-circular bend half-way down its length. I looked with both eyes, then with the right, then with the left. The phenomenon repeated itself.

I Was Not Really Alarmed

I continued to test myself, and soon found that all vertical lines developed this bend when seen with the left eye only. That evening I tried it on a book. With the left eye I saw a shadow, about the size of one of the old threepenny pieces, the top edge of which just covered the word immediately below the one I was looking at.

None of this really alarmed me. I had known a few one-eyed men: one eye is as good as two for all practical purposes. The names of Nelson and Wavell came into my mind.

So I was not prepared for the specialist's sentence of blindness. I had consulted him over many years, and he knew my eyes well. He had given me a thorough examination, particularly with the ophthalmoscope and with a fundus microscope. This is an instrument made by Carl Zeiss of Jena, now in the Russian Zone of Germany. It is a horizontal microscope fitted with a tiny searchlight and mounted in a frame which enables it to be adjusted in any direction. With it the ophthalmic surgeon can see, enormously magnified, any part of the eye. There are very few of these instruments in this country—perhaps only three or four—and they can no longer be imported.

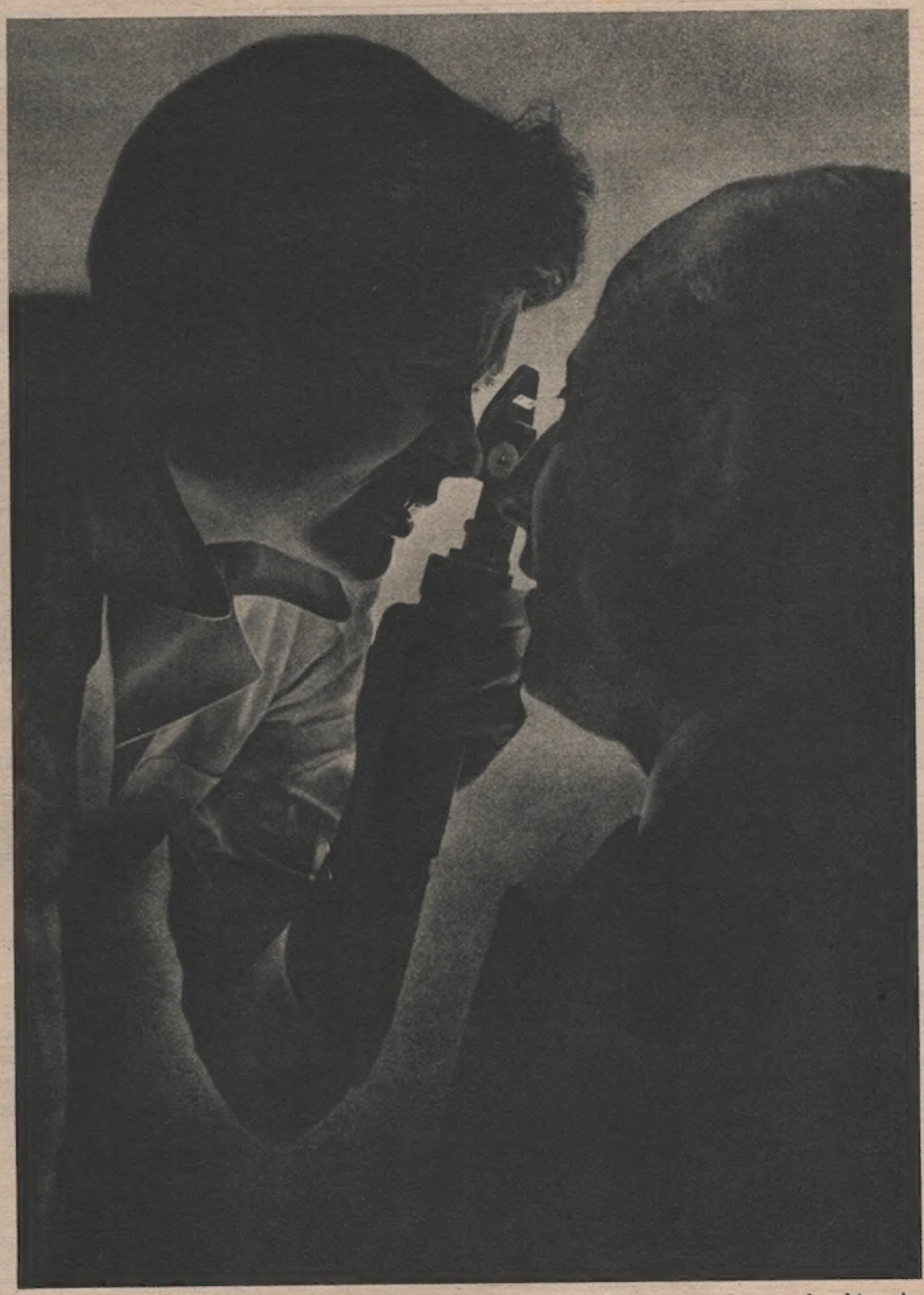
Shrinking Field Of Vision

The specialist gave me yet another test. Seated, with one eye shaded, before a black cloth, in the centre of which was a white spot, I was told to fix my gaze on the spot and never to let it wander. The specialist took a short black wand with a white tip which he laid alongside the spot. Then he slowly drew it away, telling me to call out when it disappeared. He marked this point of disappearance with a black-headed pin. By doing this in every direction he plotted on the cloth the field of vision of each of my eyes. He showed me how much smaller this was than that of a normal person.

It was after recording the results of all these tests that he gave me his verdict. I asked the inevitable question: "Can anything be done?" He said that he feared not, and went on to explain. It was retinal haemorrhage. The capillaries—tiny blood vessels at the back of the eye, no thicker than a hair—had broken. They were still bleeding; when the bleeding had stopped they would heal, leaving scars, and one cannot see clearly through a scar.

These scars were situated more or less in the central line of vision. I was told that when they had fully developed I would see nothing in this direct line. In order to see anything I would

Continued on page 34



Coltman has his eyes examined. At work, he soon grew used to having everything read to him. At home, music replaced books. "For the blind," he says, "every object must be in its exact place"

The man with a price on his head

by **STUART CLOETE**

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES WOOD

He was Jannie Moolman, the man the British couldn't hold. God must have sent him to her in her distress

As Jannie came in, the woman propped herself

THE PRISONER ROLL CALL was at six in the evening. First there was the bugle call. Then the men collected on the red hard-baked parade ground. Not tidily, not fallen in, because the prisoners were Boers—farmers, free burghers—who had been captured as they fought for liberty.

Then came the young officer and the fat sergeant. To the officer, the prisoners were rebels, an undisciplined lot who couldn't even form fours. He was Authority. He stood by the sergeant, who called the roll. The sergeant was the Voice. The Voice did not speak till the officer said, "Call the roll, Sergeant." Then he began.

There were no A's, so he began with B.

"Basson!" he shouted.

A tall, slouched man said, "*Ja.*"

The sergeant went on: "Beyers, Brink, De Jongh, Duminy. . . ."

The men said, "*Ja, ja. . . .*"

Once they had answered, they ceased to be there. Their bodies were there, but their attention—their minds and hearts—wandered. They went back to their dreams of their wives and children, of their homes and cattle, their dogs, the horses they had lost in the war.

Jan Moolman heard his name called. "*Ja,*" he said. In his mind he smiled. Tomorrow, when they called, he would not be there. His plans were made. Tomorrow, when the roll was called, Japie de Wet would answer in his place.

Moolman was a hunter by profession. He had never married and so was less unhappy than the others. He had not married because once he loved a girl—a little thing with blue eyes and blonde hair. Then she had a fever and in a week she was gone. After that, something died in his heart.

Jan was a man of medium height, dark-haired and dark-eyed as are many Boers with French blood. His skin was leathery, creased with the wrinkles of exposure to the sun and glare of Africa. He moved quickly, softly, with a slight horseman's roll.

Stripped, he was a man of iron and whipcord, bound with brass. Though he was very quiet, you felt that this stillness could explode into action at any moment.

He was a legend among his people. Sometimes it amused him. Any man could become a legend if he took enough risks and survived them. With Francina gone, he welcomed risks. They were the only thing that could take his mind off her, and if he was killed he would be with her. But he had told no one about her. Why should he? That had been in the beginning, twenty years ago.

And now that way of living, taking chances, had become a habit. He knew no other. Three things he loved—his country, hunting and horses. He hated nothing except the English, after they started burning the farms and taking the wives and children of the Boers into protective custody. Unused to confinement, many of them died in these camps, though they were cared for and well fed. They died as a caged wild bird will die, of a broken heart—the way Jan himself might die if they sent him away from his land and over the sea.

He thought of a British officer—a lancer—who had accompanied the general who had inspected the camp yesterday. The lancer had put out his hand and said: "Will you shake hands, Moolman? We are both hunters. When this is over I should like to hunt with you in Africa."

Moolman had asked about him afterwards and learned that he was a rich young man who had hunted all over the world except Africa. He was, in his way, a notable hunter with some record heads to his name. Jan did not give a damn for records; he hunted for money and for meat. But to get records a man must have some qualities. *Ja,* there were good men among the English. And even this business of burning farms was understandable in a war that had dragged on so long. Every farm was a base where tired Boers could rest and refit. *Ja,* that was war. And it brought much hatred in its train. But war was never good. Men should not hunt one another like wild beasts.

BUT they were fools, these English. No one knew it better than Jan Moolman because, among a nation of scouts, he was one of the best. He was so good that there had been a price put on his head. That made him laugh too—a price, a hundred pounds. *Ja,* he thought, I am worth as much as fifty young oxen. But it was time he went. Next week the prisoners were being moved to another camp farther to the rear, and from there they would be sent over the sea to Ceylon or St. Helena. He was one of the few among them who had seen the sea.

He had it all figured out. There was a weak place in the wire. He looked at the sun. When it was high in the heavens and burning hot, he would slip through. The other prisoners would stage a fight in the far corner. In this heat no one paid much attention to things—not when the sun was so hot that the sentries burned their hands on their rifle barrels. The Rooineks, the red-necks, as they called the English, could not stand the heat. Of course, he might be shot. But it was not likely. Anyway, in war there was always that chance; he refused to think of it. The next thing was a horse. That was planned, too. For a month, ever since he had been taken, he had watched. He had missed nothing.

All morning Jan waited. At midday he lined up to draw his rations. He ate them calmly. It was nearly time now. He watched the sentries standing sleepily; then he heard Du Toit shouting. He saw him hit Piet Swart. He saw Piet fall with Du Toit on top of him. He saw the others run up. The sentries, still lethargic, strolled towards the trouble.

The time had come. Moving quickly, he

up on one elbow. "Bring in your men," she cried weakly, "and let them watch a Boer woman die!"

reached the wire. It took him only a moment to cut the few remaining strands with the cutters he had stolen and to creep through. He was out. Now for the plan. The mistake most people made was to try and get away too fast. Moving slowly now, and easily, he drifted towards the quartermaster's store. This was a big field tent. Another moment and he was inside. Half an hour later he curled up in the nest he had made between a pile of crates. The worst was over.

If, as he hoped, his escape was not discovered until the following morning, if Jannie Moolman was not spotted as missing, they'd figure he was clear away and start after him. They wouldn't begin to look until they were ten or twenty miles away.

DURING the night he made a foray and collected food for himself from the opened crates and stores on the shelves. He took bully beef and condensed milk and some herrings in tomato sauce. Then he fitted himself out with a nice new British uniform. It made him laugh to himself as he did it. Me, Jannie Moolman, a Rooinek, he thought. But he could do it. He could play the part. As soon as he had been captured, he had borrowed shaving things and taken off his beard. The moustache he had left, and he spent much of his time twisting and twirling it, till the ends stood out like a British sergeant-major's.

From the very first, he had studied their drill, watching them and copying them. He knew how to salute. He knew how to stand to attention, to stand at ease, to salute by turning his head smartly and dropping his hand when he was mounted. His fellow prisoners thought he was mad. *Ja*, mad, but in a very sane way, he thought now. How to pass among the British; that had been the question. Why, like a Britisher—then he would be invisible.

The morning roll call went off smoothly. So he had not been noticed. Next morning, though, when they called the roll again and counted, they discovered he was gone. He heard the bugles blowing, heard orders shouted, and men mounting and riding out. Let them look, he thought, and went to sleep again very comfortably with his head on his old Boer clothes. He stayed hidden three more days. By then they had given him up. He'd even heard the quartermaster say so as he sat in the store doing his paper-work: "Got away, that's what he did. Him with a price on his head already. They'll have to put it up again, and high, if they want to catch him."

That was all he needed. As soon as it was dark, he crept out of the tent and walked smartly towards the horse lines. He even knew the horse he wanted—the colonel's bay stallion. It was one that had been captured, and could live off the veld, which was more than the big English chargers could do. Fine horses, *ja*, but fine only with twelve pounds of oats a day in their bellies. He had an envelope in his hand. He'd taken it from the office in the front of the store. He walked straight up to the sentry on the horse lines as if he were bringing a written order.

The sentry grounded his rifle to take the paper, and as he took it, Jan's hand closed on his throat. In a second he was gagged; in three minutes he was bound hand and foot and dragged into the forage. Jan then got a saddle and bridle, put them on to the bay, and led him out and mounted. With the big envelope in his hand, he rode slowly out of the camp in the direction of headquarters, ten miles away. There was no one about except a sentry on the outpost, who, seeing a cavalryman ride by in the moonlight, thought no more of it. An orderly taking a message, he thought, and not in any hurry, either.

ONCE clear, Jan began to canter, turning his horse northward. "*Ja*, my friend," he said, "you are a Boer horse again. A free horse, with less food but all Africa in which to lope. Space instead of food." The stallion laid back his ears, flicking them to listen. He seemed glad to hear the language again.

Jan laughed to be free, to be riding over the veld again, to be riding towards the mountains. Once in the Waterberg, he was safe unless his own people shot him, thinking he was a British cavalry trooper.

He rode past gutted farmhouses. Their lifeless windows stared out of broken walls like the eye-sockets in a dead man's skull. The work of the English, all of it—the cattle and horses taken, the houses burned, the women and children sent to camps to be secure against the restless Kaffirs.

He knew they had done it to break the heart of resistance; to remove points of rest and succour for the tired Boers. It was war. *Ja*, it was war, but it was hard, and many women and children had died. Still, one of these ruined houses would give him shelter. He could hide there and rest, and graze his horse, knee-hobbled, in the night.

He figured he had ridden about sixty miles when he found a place he liked the look of, a burned-out house with a fine view in all directions.

He dismounted and watered his horse at a little dam below a spring. Then he off-saddled and let his horse roll. When the horse had done, Jan picked up the saddle and led the animal through the front door of the ruin. Inside, he found a fallen rafter and put it across the door frame.

"There, my boy," he said. "Now you'll live in a house like a man. Tonight you will graze on the veld, and tomorrow we are on our way to the Waterberg." He patted the horse's neck.

Then he went to explore the house, which was larger than it had seemed from a distance. The horse was in the *voorkamer*—the front hall. There was a doorway to a room on the left and one to the right. They would have been bedrooms. The one on the left had no door, and he went in. It held nothing but some charred remains of furniture and fallen thatch. The

Continued on page 29

Eric Barker, comic who pleases himself

by JOHN ENNIS

He cares little for what his audiences think. "If we tread on people's corns," he says with a shrug, "that's just too bad." But guying the British way of life has brought him a fortune

ENTERING THE STAGE DOOR of the variety theatre in a Yorkshire town where he was to top the bill for a week in the autumn of 1949, Eric Barker gazed through his oversized hornrimmed spectacles at a note pinned to the notice board. Left there from the previous week, it said: "Thank you, Frank Randle, for bringing in the biggest audiences in the history of this theatre."

Six days later, Barker had broken another of the theatre's box office records. Attendances for his show had been the *lowest* the theatre had known. Toward the end of the week he met the theatre's managing director in the bar. Barker asked what had gone wrong. A typical Yorkshireman, the managing director replied bluntly: "To tell you the truth, lad, I can't stand you at any price. Whenever you come on the radio, I switch off. Nothing personal, mind. Have a drink."

The intellectual, sophisticated comedy-for-connoisseurs that forty-one year old Eric Barker has developed on television in *The Eric Barker Half-hour*, and on radio in *Just Fancy*, is not everybody's meat. "He cleaves his public," says his television producer, Graeme Muir. "People either like him or hate him. Nobody is indifferent."

Barker is happy to have it that way. When his radio series *Merry-Go-Round*, for two seasons the most popular show on the air, ended in 1949, he sat down in his cottage home at Stalisfield, deep in rural Kent, to think out a new approach to humour. "*Merry-Go-Round* had brought me £30,000," he says. "But the catch-phrase and the shrieking audience, which I had used so much to my own advantage, were being overdone. If the goose lays too many golden eggs, down goes the price of gold." In a scathing article on "Humour On The Air" which he wrote for the *B.B.C. Quarterly*, he declared that radio comedy "must be instantly understandable to any slothful half-wit who is simultaneously shaving and listening to a gramophone. Ask them to think, and you are out."

When Barker emerged with the first script for his television series, he had rejected this formula. Graeme Muir was pale with apprehension after reading it through. "That script was the most unfunny thing I had ever read. But when I saw Eric and Pearl Hackney rehearsing, I roared with laughter. Everything depended on the way they put it over."

Muir explains that *The Eric Barker Half-hour* is for people who like to have to think while they are being entertained. "We don't deliberately aim to be highbrow, but we don't pander to popular taste, and if we tread on people's corns, that is just too bad." Letters from outraged listeners to his programmes constantly amuse Barker. A recent sketch in his radio series, *Just Fancy*, showing what might happen if a northern factory manager took charge of the navy, brought complaints from business men ("I have known many northern business men, and none was a bit like that"); from wives of naval officers ("An insult to the Senior Service"); and, because of a fourteen-word "aside" in the sketch, from miners ("You come and dig it yourself").

Years of receiving such letters have convinced him that it is impossible to please everybody. "So I just please myself," he says with a shrug. "If it pleases the public, too, I am delighted."

Barker learned in his early days at the Windmill Theatre to care little for what the audience thinks. With his wry smile, he explains, "At the first of the five daily shows I would sometimes do my act to an audience of two men reading newspapers." Vivian van Damm, owner of the Windmill, has said, "I discovered he didn't care tuppence how I reacted, either, even though I paid his salary."

It was at the Windmill that he met and married Pearl Hackney, a young ballet dancer from Burton-on-Trent. It was no case of love at first sight. "For two years I couldn't stick him . . . couldn't *stick* him"—Pearl wrinkles her nose in distaste at the memory even today, after sixteen years of happy marriage. Asked why, Barker looks shamefaced, tugs at his suddenly-too-tight bow tie, and confesses, "I was a bit bumptious in those days. I had been on the stage for two years, and I thought I knew it all."

Rehearsing for the first broadcast of *Just Fancy* in 1951. From left: Deryck Guyler, Patricia Gilbert, Desmond Walter Ellis, Eric Barker, John Warrington, Pearl Hackney

Archbishop's Question

Later they became "attracted mentally." They are rather proud of the grown-up way they approached marriage. Eric toured Australia, and Pearl stayed in Britain to see if they felt the same way when he returned. They did.

A slim, quick-to-smile man with a bouncy, restless manner, Eric Barker was born in Croydon, the son of a paper merchant. He went to Whitgift School, Croydon, which numbers among its famous ex-pupils Lord Tedder and Walter de la Mare. At a recent speech-day the Archbishop of Canterbury sat in the school hall and heard the names of these illustrious old boys read out, followed a little later by that of Eric Barker. "Who's he?" whispered the archbishop to his neighbour. The neighbour explained, mentioning such household phrases as "Steady, Barker!" and "Sheepskin liberty bodice" to jog his memory. "Never heard of him," said the archbishop.

After trying his father's business for a couple of years, Barker broke away and earned a living writing humorous short stories. His ambition was—and is—to write plays. He thought that his plays would be much better if he learned

The Barkers love the country, and live in a quiet Kentish village. He writes all his radio and television scripts in a converted garage in the garden

stagecraft, so he wrote to repertory companies for a job. He was taken on by Emile Littler, who was then, in 1933, managing the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Another newcomer was Bernard Miles. They had "walk-on" parts in a play called *Once In A Lifetime*. Noticing that the two youngsters were so keen to learn that they never left the side of the stage, the producer rewarded them with a small scene before the curtain as two American electricians. They began spinning out their scene, putting down the toolbags they carried, yawning and stretching—until the producer noticed. The play came to London, was unsuccessful, and their pay was reduced from £3 a week to £2 10s.

So Barker worked out an act of imitations of well-known people and began at the Windmill at £4 a week—five shillings more than the chorus girls were receiving. He stayed nearly six years, leaving occasionally for other engagements and returning. On his last session there, in 1939, he earned £20.

He Did Not Look Funny

When war came, he joined the navy as a second-class stoker. During his recuperation at Lowestoft from a serious illness, he and Pearl took charge of a theatre and put on shows for thousands of sailors. After three years on the lower deck, he was commissioned.

On leaving the navy he began his series of regular broadcasts, writing the script and taking the lead in *Merry-Go-Round*. Leslie Bridgmont, who produced this show, still remembers the first time he gave Eric a broadcast, before the war. He looked sadly at Eric's rather clerical appearance and remarked to a technician: "This fellow looks as much like a comedian as my foot." But after the broadcast, Pearl Hackney, who had heard what Bridgmont said, ran to the nervous Eric. "It's all right—he laughed," she assured him.

Barker has always written his own scripts. He writes in longhand in a converted garage in the garden of his cottage. "He likes living in the country so much," says Charles Maxwell, producer of *Just Fancy*, "that after finishing a rehearsal at midnight he will drive fifty miles home, snatch a few hours' sleep, take his ten-year-old daughter, Petronella, six miles to school next morning, and be back in London for more rehearsals at 10.30 a.m."

Though many of his television shows poke fun at other television shows, there have been no complaints from the victims. One producer was heard to say: "I wish he would take the mike out of my show; it might arouse more interest in it." When he heard Barker was to guy his programme, *In The News*, producer John Irwin offered his backgrounds "to make it more authentic." After Pearl had done a particularly wicked skit on a television woman interviewer, Mary Malcolm pleaded with Barker's producer: "It *was* me, wasn't i. Somebody said it was Joan Gilbert, and I was most *hurt*."

Realizing that viewers, because they see as well as hear a programme, tire of a personality more quickly than radio listeners, he refuses to do more than six television shows a year. "I have a long-term policy," he explains.

The ideas he writes into his scripts come direct from life. Gently guying the British way of life has become the Barker hallmark. "I feel sure," says Charles Maxwell, "that he looks at all the people he meets and thinks how he can use them in a script." Years ago, Bernard Miles noticed his friend's curiosity. "He carries two searchlights behind those larger-than-life spectacles, to see what other people miss."

Sometimes his observation is too keen, and a sketch for his television show has to be dropped. This recently happened to a burlesque of a well-known comedian. "I felt he was pillorying the person rather than the programme," says Graeme Muir. "It was a little too cruel." Eric agreed.

Knows How To Infuriate

While he has so far avoided open scenes with any of his victims, he has a knack for getting into arguments with strangers. Pearl has long since resigned herself to his habit of running into trouble. "I am always having to take his arm and murmur, 'Come along, dear,' before somebody punches him on the nose," she says. Barker explains that this is the result, not of an aggressive nature, but of an ability to find the exact word that will infuriate people who cross him.

He remembers once trying to move a car that was preventing him from parking his own car, late at night after the theatre. A window opened and a woman poured abuse on him for making a noise. Suddenly she screamed: "Don't you 'it 'im, Alf. No, don't you 'it 'im." He looked round and found that "Alf" was a small man who stood quietly beside him. Not afraid of what such a small man could do, Barker said brusquely: "Come on, don't stand there like a fool, give me a hand with this car." Without a word, the man helped him.

A few days later, Barker learned that the small man was the local blacksmith, renowned for his hasty temper. Added the man who pointed this out: "Just done time, he has, for hitting a bloke with a bottle." THE END

ILLUSTRATION BY FRED LAURENT

The sky was clouded by great billowing funnels of smoke. It was hard on the Norwegian owners, but my orders were clear: blow up every oil factory

COMMANDO! (4) by *Brigadier JOHN DURNFORD SLATER, D.S.O.*

WE CATCH THE GERMANS NAPPING

German troops would meet the British wherever they landed, Hitler had boasted. Well, here we were in Occupied Norway and his soldiers were disappointingly absent. We decided to send Adolf a telegram

THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS town of Stamsund was not yet visible as we approached the harbour mouth on a morning in March, 1941. Then suddenly, hundreds of small fishing trawlers poured out of the harbour. George Herbert, a corporal now, was beside me in the landing craft. "There comes the fishing boats, sir," he said, "dead on schedule." Every officer and man had been given the information contained in the intelligence summary.

The flotilla leader was still nervous about the fact that it was daylight instead of dark, as our intelligence had predicted. "How about giving her the gun now, Colonel?" he suggested anxiously.

I shook my head. "No, we're doing nicely," I said. "Let the fishing boats get out of the way."

A destroyer fired a burst of tracer across the bows of the leading trawlers. The captain didn't want them to go out to sea—he wanted them under control but clear of the entrance, which was merely a hundred yards across at the neck. In a few minutes the Lofoten fishing boats, sizing up the situation, had all hoisted Norwegian flags—an act which the Germans had specifically forbidden—and their crews joined in a great, chorusing cheer of welcome. I felt good about that.

"Well, at least the Norwegians seem to be on our side," George Herbert said with a grin.

It seemed as if our landings were going to be unopposed, but at that moment one of our destroyers, the Somali, sighted an armed German trawler pulling away from the harbour. Suddenly, the sound of gunfire shattered the early morning; but the threatened resistance faded almost as soon as it had begun. The Somali, wasting no time whatever, put the trawler out of commission, killing fourteen and wounding five of her twenty-four-man crew. We went on with our landing.

The craft I was in snuggled up to a fish jetty. I jumped eagerly ashore, followed by my men. Perhaps I was *too* eager: I fell at the first fence—a long, three-feet-high pile of frozen cods' heads. When I picked myself up, somewhat sheepishly, I looked up the main street of

Stamsund. It was empty. Then, a moment later, the local postman appeared, hurrying to greet us.

He said something in Norwegian. I turned hopefully to Martin Linge, a tall and slender Norwegian captain who had offered to act as my interpreter. "Ask him if there are any German soldiers in the town," I said.

"He says no," Martin told me a moment later. "But there are Gestapo and German businessmen.

"Where are they?"

The postman, eager to help, used his hands excitedly while giving information. A police sergeant came up and interrupted him. They were both anxious to co-operate against the Germans. Between them they provided us with the addresses of all the Gestapo agents in the town. As each of my troops came along, I told them to go on to their planned objectives—the factories and installations to be demolished. The police sergeant was not content: he insisted on providing guides for them from his small force.

I could see that Linge, who had not stepped on Norwegian soil for a long time, was keen to get around and talk to his own people. "May I go into town, Colonel?" he asked.

"Go ahead, Martin," I agreed. "Just leave one of your men to interpret for me. Do what you can to keep things friendly, and report to me from time to time and let me know how things are going on."

"Right!" he said, overjoyed.

Squealed Like A Pig

The local police sergeant led my party to the police headquarters—a long, low wooden building facing the quay. "Would you like to use this as your headquarters while you are in town?" the policeman asked hospitably.

"Thank you very much—it's just right." I took over. Fifteen minutes later I was standing in the doorway when I saw Lofty King and Bill Chitty, both big men and unit military police, forcing a prisoner along between them. Each had one of his arms. Squealing his protests, the prisoner looked and sounded like a fat pig being taken to slaughter.

Lofty King saw me and grinned. "Here's your top Gestapo boy, Colonel. What do you want done with him?" Behind this ill-matched trio trailed a gang of locals—men, women, children and dogs—jeering, barking, laughing in delight. The Gestapo chap was cursing balefully in German. You didn't have to understand the language to guess his feelings.

I said, "Put him on a landing craft and send him right off to the Beatrix."

The civilian police sergeant sighed, grinning. "He's a bad swine," he declared happily. "I'm glad to see him go in good company."

A Message For Berlin

I had sent some men off under Charlie Head to take over the telephone exchange. Charlie knew very little about such matters, but was remarkable at improvisation. He reported back to me by civilian telephone in good voice. "All ours," he announced. Later I heard that Lt. R. L. J. Wills had also become involved in a communication problem. He went to the post office and sent off a telegram addressed to A. Hitler, Berlin. It read: YOU SAID YOUR LAST SPEECH GERMAN TROOPS WOULD MEET THE BRITISH WHEREVER THEY LANDED. WHERE ARE YOUR TROOPS? (SIGNED) WILLS, 2/LT.

Charlie Head was soon back with me. While Johnny Giles filed his No. 3 Troop into a borrowed bus and set off in great heart for an oil factory on the outskirts of town, Charlie and I took a walk down the street. We visited a man called Johannsen, the owner of the largest factory in the town and of a general store adjoining it. By now, demolitions had begun elsewhere. The explosions around us made the landing sound like a real battle—which, of course, it was not. The noise was to continue, together with smoke and flames, all day.

Returning from the raid. On left, Commander Anthony Kimmins (now a film director); a British businessman who was a prisoner of the Germans on Lofoten; Joe Brunton and Durnford Slater

"The Norwegians took the raid well," writes Slater. "They cheered and gave us gifts of scarves. As we sailed away, they became silent, and over the sea came the sound of the Norwegian anthem"

When Charlie and I arrived at the Johannsen factory, its owner, prosperous-looking, stout, grey-haired, was in the midst of a violent argument with Williams, one of our demolition officers. "But I've never sold oil to the Germans!" Johannsen protested, "I'm pro-British."

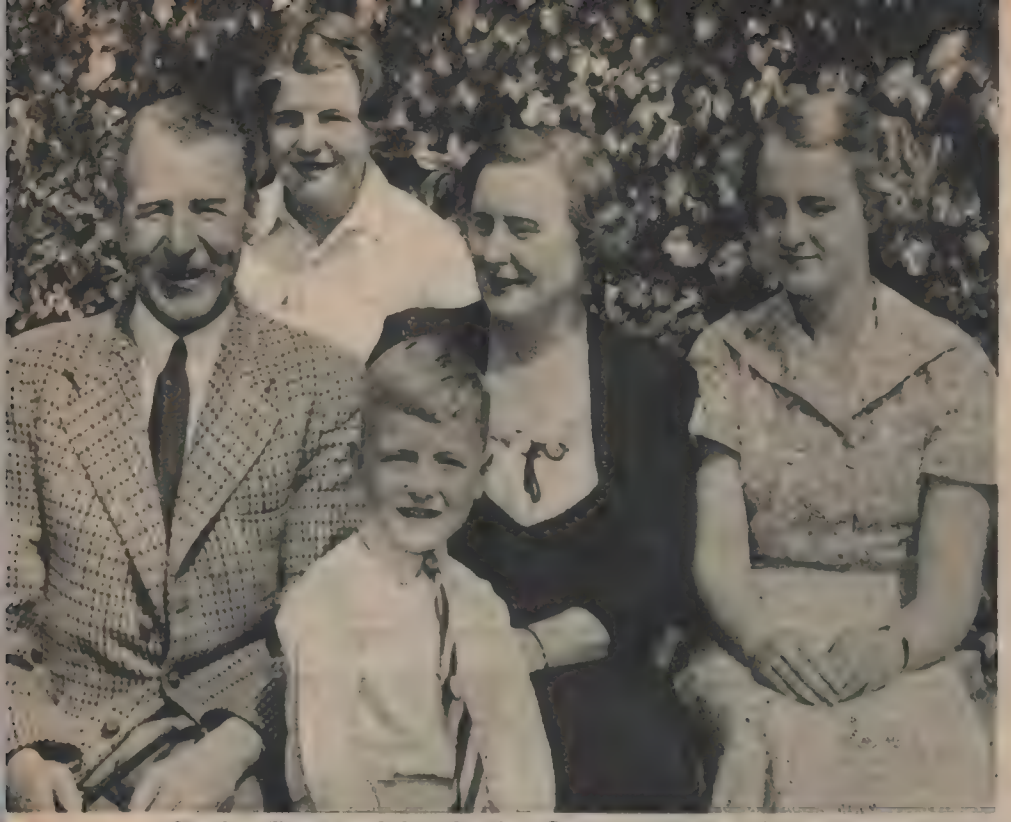
It was obvious to me that none of the factory owners could have avoided working for the Germans, regardless of their personal wishes or feelings. I interrupted: "Then to whom does the oil go?" Johannsen was unable to answer.

I said to Williams: "Blow the place up." Twenty minutes later the factory was gone.

During the preparations for the charge of explosions, I saw many Norwegians roaring with laughter. Others raided Johannsen's store and came out loaded with bags of flour. Once his factory was destroyed, Johannsen himself seemed ready to accept the loss and understand our aims. He told us of other factories which we had not yet destroyed. In fact, each factory owner seemed to take special pleasure in informing on rival owners. It didn't matter to me what they said or did. My orders were clear: blow up every oil factory.

Halfway through the demolitions, however, I decided it would save time and ill-feeling all round if I explained our motives to all the owners. I had them assembled in the police station. I stood up before them. "I'm sorry to have to do this," I told them. "I know we are destroying your livelihood, but you must see that it is necessary. This oil has been going to the Germans and is used to bomb Britain." I paused—I hoped dramatically. "You are not to work for the Germans any more," I said. "We will be back in a few months to check up on you."

At this point Bill Chitty, who had been



Charles Head and his family. Slater's adjutant, he was wounded in Sicily and won an M.C. He is now a veterinary surgeon in Cornwall

Durnford Slater (right) watches a blazing Lofoten oil factory. Even the Germans grudgingly praised the success and secrecy of the raid

standing behind me with his tommy gun cradled in his arms, accidentally let off a burst. To my dismay, the bullets splintered the floor between my feet. I turned to him. "You want to be careful with those things," I said, "they're dangerous."

I think the factory owners thought this was done intentionally, to highlight the act. At any rate, they seemed to take my message most seriously.

By noon, great billowing funnels of smoke clouded the sky. There was the smell of burning oil mingled with that of fish. We were scheduled to sail at one in the afternoon. So far, everything had gone like clockwork. My reports told me that all the planned demolitions had now been carried out. In fact, our affairs were running so smoothly that Commander Anthony Kimmins—now a well-known film director—who had come on the raid as the Admiralty's Press Relations Officer, found life a little dull and went ski-ing on a steep, snow-coverd hillside behind the town.

Blonde They Left Behind

At noon, a large crowd of civilians began to assemble at the quay, mostly young men with a scattering of women. Earlier, I had instructed the police sergeant to circulate the information that I sought volunteers to serve with the free Norwegian forces in Britain. I had suggested that any young men so inclined should assemble on the quay. Now there were several hundred there—a cheerful, noisy and excited crowd. But we had room to take only 150 from Stamsund.

I said to Charlie Head: "Will you make the selection? For God's sake, don't take any women!"

"You know me, John. I wouldn't do a thing like that."

I left him to it, but returned at half-past twelve to check on his progress. The landing craft was packed. In it were 149 men—and one girl. She was a lovely blonde in her early twenties. I give Charlie that much: he showed taste.

The girl smiled trustingly up at me. Charlie, standing on the quay, saluted gravely. "I've made the selection, Colonel. Shall I send them off?"

We had no orders about bringing women volunteers back and I had already had enough battle with authority. I said, "What's the woman doing there, Charlie? Have her turned off at once."

Charlie saluted. Without a word he went on board and took the girl off. She burst into tears. Charlie looked at me. I said nothing, feeling myself to be a heartless brute.

Before we left the quayside, we distributed to the townspeople goodwill gifts we had brought them from Britain: tea and coffee—which they lacked completely—and toys for the children. Delighted, they pressed on us in return gloves, sweaters and scarves.

Martin Linge was back at my side. "Do you think the population took the raid well, Martin?" I asked.

He nodded. "All the good ones took it well. That's all that matters."

I left in the last craft. Now the whole town was on the quay, cheering continuously. As we moved out of the harbour, they suddenly became silent. Then, over the water, came the singing of the Norwegian national anthem. I could hardly bear to leave.

Very soon, however, our flotilla was under way back for Scapa. I knew that the raid could hardly have been more successful. We had destroyed eighteen factories: had sunk twenty thousand tons of shipping in harbour; had sent nearly a million gallons of oil and petrol up in smoke. Throughout the Lofotens we had taken prisoner 216 German civilians and sixty quislings. We had seized maps, code systems, valuable documents. We had carried off a large number of loyal Norwegians who volunteered to continue their country's fight from Britain. To win all this we had not lost a man.

On the home front the press shouted the story. The people talked of it in tones of pride. Even the German radio grudgingly had to praise the complete success and secrecy of the raid.

Trained American Marines

The American Embassy in London had, of course, heard of our good job in the Lofotens. The United States was not yet in the war, but they knew they might be some day. For this reason the Embassy sent forty carefully chosen American Marines to live and train with us for some weeks. We were to teach them, as a sort of reverse lend-lease, our latest ideas. The U.S. Marines soon won all our shooting competitions and decided that our men were similar in outlook to themselves. We got along beautifully.

It was about this time that Charlie Head got to hear that there were some good men at the Commando Replacement depot at Achnacarry, near Fort William. We could always use good men. The depot then was not in a state of advanced development, and it was a case of the first C.O. to arrive taking away with him whatever men he wanted. I arranged for a car at six the next morning to take Charlie and myself to Achnacarry.

Charlie had a wonderful ear for the military bush telegraph and reported to me that Dudley Lister, commanding No. 4 Commando, was also due in Achnacarry on the next day for the same purpose. Arriving in Achnacarry early next morning, I reckoned we had an hour's advantage over Lister.

Charlie and I went to the parade ground where the available men were drawn up. I recognized the drill instructor as a man who had previously been in No. 3 Commando. "What are these fellows like?" I asked him.

"They're a mixture," he said. "Most of them will make it, but some of them need a lot more training."

I said: "Dismiss the men. Have them on parade again in half an hour's time—half of them in best battledress being drilled, the other half in their oldest clothes doing a training scheme. Make sure they're not doing it too well." Then I asked him to put his best men on the lackadaisical training scheme.

He Fell For The Trap

Dudley Lister, a tall, aristocratic-looking officer, who had at one time been amateur heavyweight boxing champion of Great Britain, arrived—exactly as I had expected—an hour after us. We greeted one another effusively.

"I suggest we share the men out, Dudley," I said. "We're pretty well off in No. 3—you take first choice." Dudley fell for this. Naturally, he selected the smart-looking squad doing the drill. I took the others gleefully.

Nevertheless, Dudley and I were always the best of friends. We just never had any scruples about pulling a fast one on each other.

For some time Charlie Head and I were billeted in great comfort at Kelburn Castle, near Largs, the home of the Earl and Countess of Glasgow. Our host, a thick-set man of medium height with a white, pointed beard, was wonderfully kind to us. "I wish I were serving with you chaps," he would say wistfully. He was about sixty years of age.

Because of his kindness I found it an embarrassment when, very occasionally, some individual activity from within the ranks of No. 3 Commando seemed to repay his lordship with ingratitude. I always left Charlie to deal with such errors.

One day, when we were leaving for the office after luncheon, I heard Lord Glasgow calling in a loud voice: "Head! Head!" I jumped into

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TONIGHT AT TARARA

by ***BURNHAM CARTER***

ILLUSTRATED BY CLIVE UPTTON

Tio read the note and cursed. . . . Something must have gone wrong. It meant telling his wife more lies; it meant returning tonight to Tarara

A GREAT DRIFT OF SUNSHINE filled the narrow street outside the Café Mosca in Havana, and Tio Martinez, proprietor of the café, strolled comfortably through it towards the Parque Central. He was slender and neatly dressed in a linen suit, blue shirt and pink tie.

At the bookstall he bought a paper and paused momentarily at the kerb to glance at the headlines when a man standing next to him said, without looking up: "You are Tio Martinez, are you not?"

"It is my responsibility," Tio conceded.

"A friend of yours would like to see you after eight tonight at the Café of the Little Nine."

"Even I have more than one friend," Tio said. "Which is this one?"

"That is all I know," the man answered, and vanished among the passers-by.

A few years before, when Tio had operated with some success in Havana's underworld, such cryptic messages had not been uncommon. Since marrying the plump and pretty Amelia, he had discouraged them. At her request he had devoted himself to a life of honest toil, although it occasionally seemed to him unfortunate that honesty was never associated with anything else. He did not intend to depart from his chosen career now, but there could be no harm in gratifying a normal curiosity as to the purport of the message.

He returned to his own Café Mosca. It was open to the street and contained some twenty marble-topped tables on a blue tiled floor. These faced a long bar, backed with bottles and a coffee urn, and piled up at one end with pineapples. It breathed the characteristic fragrance of Cuban cafés—a blend of rum, coffee, limes and the pungent Cuban cigarettes. In the slack period after the dinner hour there were only some nine people present. Tio felt he could safely turn over the bar to Pepe, Amelia's religious but dim-witted brother.

The Café of the Little Nine was situated, like the Mosca, in that part of Havana known as "the old city." Tio sat down against the wall, and after a moment a fat, greasy-faced Cuban approached him from the rear of the café—one José Vera, who, after small beginnings at shoplifting, had risen, by working while others slept, to the promotion of various smuggling enterprises.

"My very dear friend," José murmured, taking the seat beside him. "I would buy you a drink, but I have no money."

"Two coffees," Tio told the waiter, ignoring the look of disappointment on the other's face. "What is the news of you, José?"

The fat one leaned forward impressively. "My friend, the career of José Vera in Cuba has come to an end. The career of José Vera in the great

"At times," Amelia sighed, "I weary of it here. I should like a holiday." Looking at her, Tio struggled with his conscience

United States of America is about to begin."

"So."

José nodded. "Yes, I must leave Havana," he said. "To speak frankly, I cannot live in the same town with the police."

"What has happened to make that more difficult than usual?"

"Recently I met a man who had more money than he deserved. I took it away from him." José closed his eyes in resignation. "There was no way for me to know he was a senator. Since the police have decided to make an issue of it, I am leaving."

"It will serve them right," Tio murmured.

"Normally, I should have no trouble in making arrangements for my departure. But at present I am confined to my room here, and my contacts are watched. So I thought of you, my dear Tio, who even still know the waterfront as well as any man in Havana."

Since José had already indicated that he had no money, Tio acknowledged this by murmuring, "Ah!"

"I am well aware that you would do this for friendship alone," José went on. "But one must live! Fortunately, there is a way whereby the profit need not be merely spiritual. Just before my encounter with the senator, I had been in touch with four Europeans who yearn for American soil."

José paused to fill his coffee cup half full of sugar, and stirred the mixture.

"You may be surprised to learn of the increase in prices for this work," he resumed learnedly. "Inflation, of course, and the increased risk. The Europeans offered twelve hundred dollars apiece for transportation."

Tio was indeed surprised, even astonished, at this rate of pay. On his last smuggling venture —some years before—he had charged a total of one thousand dollars for six Chinese. Now, twelve hundred dollars apiece for four was four thousand eight hundred dollars! And only yesterday he had seen the battle-scarred motor cruiser of Manolo, the Basque, lying idle in the Almendares River. But there was his promise to Amelia to refrain from such activities.

"How I wish I could help you, José," Tio said, "but I am only an honest restaurant keeper."

"But you can still be an honest restaurant keeper!" José expostulated. "This is just a small transaction on the side. Think it over, my friend."

TIO walked back to the Mosca, struggling with his conscience. In this unequal combat, his conscience was only able to postpone the decision. At midnight, after the café closed, he withdrew to the apartment upstairs where Amelia had already retired. She was seated before the mirror, clad in only the fundamental garments. She had been brushing her hair, but had paused in discouragement.

"At times," she said, I weary of it here. I should like to leave it for a month and go away for a holiday."

"Why not?" Tio asked, hearing a trumpet blow across the battlefield of his soul.

"Why not!"

"We can hire someone to run it and take a holiday."

"We do not have the money."

"Paris, Rome, Vienna," Tio exclaimed recklessly.

"You are mad!"

"Well, then, a weekend down the island."

"I like you better mad," Amelia said.

"Have faith, then, my tuberose, and the money will come." Tio's struggle with his conscience was concluded.

The next morning he took a taxi to the

Almendares River on the outskirts of Havana. Manolo's sixty-foot cruiser, La Sorpresa, was moored in the river's mouth, with Manolo lying on the deck in the sun, a straw hat over his eyes, and his naked, calloused feet flopped apart. Tio kicked the feet gently and called Manolo by name. "There may be a little business for you tomorrow night," he said. "To the Florida coast. Can you do it?"

"What kind of business?"

"Five men."

"How much?"

"Six hundred dollars for the trip."

"Twelve hundred."

"One thousand," Tio said. "Do you want all the money in the world?"

Manolo grunted.

"Pick us up off Tarara beach at nine," Tio said. He explained the details and returned to the Café of the Little Nine. José Vera was there with a thin man with a hard-bitten face.

"This man is the spokesman for the little group I mentioned to you," José said.

There was something vaguely familiar about him. "I presume you know my name, *señor*," Tio said. "What is yours?"

The other stared at him. "It does not matter."

"It matters to me. I deal only with people I know."

"Let him burn in hell, then," the man said softly, turning to José Vera.

"Ah, my dear sir," José protested. "We are friends, we are Cubans, we wish to serve each other! Tio, this is Roberto Mendin."

Tio remembered, then. He had smuggled a shipment of guns for Roberto Mendin years ago, when the latter was just a boy—an idealistic university student, member of the secret ABC plotting a revolution against the dictator Machado. But Mendin had been caught, tortured by the police, left for dead in the street. The revolution triumphed, but it wasn't what he had dreamed, so he turned against that, too, became an outlaw from them all, and finally he had joined the Communist Party.

Tio, who took people as they came—and some queer ones had come—would have been as happy to pass this one by. Such men were dangerous. But he had already made his decision, and it was only for once, and for a satisfactory profit.

"I will arrange the transportation," he told José Vera. "Tomorrow night. For five. Does this one go?"

"No. He is merely their spokesman."

"I protect them from the double-cross," Mendin said. "If there is a double-cross—snick!" He drew his finger across his throat.

Mendin's face was so unpleasant that it pained Tio to look at it. He addressed his instructions chiefly to José Vera. He would pick them up by car the next evening, and they would meet the cruiser off the coast east of Havana Harbour at nine o'clock. They should arrive at Matecumbe in the Florida Keys in less than four hours.

THAT night, at the Mosca, Tio looked up from the bar to see the smooth, handsome face and broad shoulders of Captain Raoul Molina, of the Cuban Secret Police, looming before him. The captain and Tio had met on several occasions in the bad old days, and each respected the other's ability in his field.

"I came to ask your help, Tio," the captain said, accepting a cup of coffee.

"We are always eager to be of service to the police, Captain."

"Yes, I know. There is a man named José Vera, who is a friend of yours, I think?"

Tio looked thoughtful. "Is he thin and with few teeth?" he asked.

"No, he is fat and his teeth are sound," Molina replied shortly, "as you well know." His eyes suddenly became hard. "I mean business, my friend. He robbed a senator and broke his jaw."

"The first is bad," Tio said. "The second I cannot find it in my heart to condemn."

"Our orders are to bring him in," the captain said. "So far, he has escaped us. With your wide acquaintance, I am confident that you can find out for me where he is."

"I shall do my best, Captain, of course. But I am out of touch, being a mere restaurant keeper!"

The captain turned round to face the café and exclaimed, as if in surprise: "Why, half of your customers have gone!"

"They come and go, Captain."

"I hope my presence did not disturb them. It would be unfortunate if we had to assign a policeman to watch the café."

Tio conceded the point.

"Well, let us hope that will not be necessary," the captain concluded briskly. "Good night, Tio. Call me if you have any news."

Amelia, who had observed the encounter from the kitchen, came in. "What did that goat want?" she asked.

"He wants to know where José Vera is. The police have special orders to get him. If we don't help, Molina will station a policeman here."

"*Madré mia!*" Amelia saw, with dismay, the café's small and hard-earned profit wiped out.

"But do not fret," Tio reassured her, as an idea came to him. "There should be a way to satisfy the police without hurting José Vera."

Actually, the captain's inquiry was a blessing to Tio. It provided him with the excuse which he needed when he told Amelia he would be away the next night: "It is the José Vera matter, Little Flower."

The half-truth weighed a little on his conscience, but only a little, and not for long.

He needed two cars for the next evening. Sam, the American taxi-driver, who never cared where he was going, provided one: Tio drove the other. Sam picked up José Vera, whom he knew, and two of the others, along with Roberto Mendin, who accompanied them to the embarkation point as protector. The four aliens all had the same malevolent, closed faces, and spoke in a tongue strange to Tio.

The two cars rounded Havana Harbour and proceeded on the Matanzas highway for several miles, turning north on a narrow cart road, thick with dust and full of holes. On either side, the darkening land was flat and desolate. A wind, tangy with salt, blew in from the sea.

The cars lurched in and out of the potholes and halted finally on a rise where the earth ran into sand. Before them was the deep black of the sea, with little fringes of foam. Tio walked to the water's edge and signalled three times with his flashlight. Almost immediately a light

Amelia came in as soon as the police officer had gone. "He wants to know where José Vera is," Tio explained. "They have special orders to get him"

Tio counted the hundred-dollar notes that Mend

n had handed to him: there were forty-eight. Mendin moved closer, gripping the automatic. "If anything goes wrong," he whispered, "we shall meet again"

pricked the darkness in answer. From the bushes on the bank, Tio pulled a dinghy and two oars.

"I will go with you on the first trip," Roberto Mendin muttered at Tio's shoulder. He waved an automatic pistol in his hand. "To make sure."

Tio gave a derisive laugh. "What a life you have, *señor*!" he replied.

MENDIN sat in the bow, Tio in the middle with the oars, and the two refugees, silent now, in the stern.

Tio rowed about a quarter of a mile through a phosphorescent sea, his oars churning pools of silver in the water.

Manolo's voice hailed him: "Tio!"

"Hold it!" Mendin ordered.

The boat rocked gently in the sea. The dark bulk of La Sorpresa was no more than a hundred feet away. Mendin turned a flashlight on it, focusing on Manolo's long figure.

"Proceed slowly," he said.

Tio pulled the oars. Something hit the gunwale with a hard slap, and something else rushed by Tio's head in a cold spray of brine—it was a narrow, beaked fish about two feet long, which cleared the boat and struck the luminous water on the other side, skittering on its tail.

"Billfish!" Tio shouted. "Put out the light!" He rolled over flat on his stomach.

The hopping billfish, or *pez agujon*, was well known to Cuban fishermen, and dangerous if disturbed. With a beak like an ice-pick, the fish could propel itself over the surface on its tail with incredible speed. It was attracted by light, and in the waters where these fish were running, no fisherman carried a lantern in a low, open boat at night.

But Mendin was no fisherman, and to him Tio's action merely looked suspicious. He swung the light from Manolo to Tio, raising his gun and crying: "If this is a trick——"

"Out—out with the light, fathead!" Manolo called. "It is dangerous!"

The two aliens in the stern began to jabber in alarm, and after a moment, Mendin turned the flashlight off, growling: "No one can see us here."

Tio shrugged. This was no time for explanation. He pulled the dinghy alongside La Sorpresa, deposited the two aliens, and returned to shore. Before making the second trip with the other two and José Vera, he turned to Mendin and said tersely: "And now your part, *señor*."

Mendin, still clutching the automatic, handed him a packet of hundred-dollar notes—forty-eight of them.

As Tio began counting, Mendin moved closer. "If anything goes wrong we shall meet again," he said in a menacing whisper.

"Under any condition that would be unpleasant," Tio replied.

He rowed to the cruiser, and they hauled the dinghy aboard. La Sorpresa's two engines muttered in their throats, burst into a roar. She sped northwards at close to twenty knots.

After about three and a half hours, Tio saw a string of lights marking a long tail of keys off the Florida mainland.

WITH the engines throttled down, La Sorpresa, under Tio's direction, headed for a spot some distance above the highway tollgate where the water curled into the land. Here there was a dock of planks, surrounded by bushes and scrub trees—a landing point developed in prohibition days by rum-runners, and used by Tio on several occasions.

"I will go first, before these apes," José

Continued on page 32

On the Pierre St. Martin in the French Pyrenees, tragedy had struck. The bid to explore one of the most amazing caves ever found had turned to horrifying drama. Eleven hundred feet into the depths of the earth, four men — Jacques Labeyrie, Haroun Tazieff, Beppo Occhialini and Marcel Loubens —had been lowered on a slender steel cable. Now, as Loubens began the return journey, the cable had broken, and a dying man lay at the bottom of the cave

FOR THE RECORD: Part 2 of a John Bull Special

Battle for life in the cave of disaster

by W. E. ARMSTRONG

MARCEL LOUBENS HAD FALLEN thirty feet through the air and had rolled for another hundred down the almost perpendicular pile of rocks at the bottom of the cave. It was a terrible fall, shockingly brutal to the men who had witnessed it. On the surface, more than a thousand feet above, the sudden slackening of the cable did not appear serious. It was believed that Loubens was only just off the ground, and that he could not have fallen more than six feet. Calls down the telephone produced no reply.

There was no reply because Tazieff, Labeyrie and Occhialini were carrying Loubens down to the camp sixty feet below the point where his fall had ended. It was hard work on the steep, slippery rocks. It was made harder by the knowledge that every jarring step might irreparably injure the unconscious man's almost certainly fractured spine. But it was out of the question to leave Loubens lying where he fell, right under the cave's shaft and exposed to the showers of falling stones.

At the camp, they laid Loubens on a trellis bed and covered him with a sleeping-bag. The descent of twenty yards had taken them more than half an hour. When the helmet was taken off, the skull appeared to be uninjured, but there was a deep wound in the jaw. The left arm was broken and, in his coma, Loubens was making movements with his right arm which seemed to indicate that his back was hurting.

All Hung On A Single Bolt

When the cable was examined, the cause of the accident was obvious. The cable had not snapped; but the loop which the thin wire made by doubling back on itself had collapsed under the strain. The loop had been secured by a single nut and bolt. Loubens's life, and the lives of all who had come down or gone up on the cable, had depended on its strength.

Labeyrie called the surface; he described the fall and explained Loubens's symptoms to Dr. Mairey. The doctor told him to keep the injured man immobile and warm, and promised to come down as soon as the cable could be repaired. Labeyrie disconnected the headphones and the cable was withdrawn.

When the gravity of the fall became known, there was consternation approaching panic on the surface. A dozen men, shepherds and muleteers, at once set off down the mountain to give the alarm in the village of Saint-Engrace.

The position was extremely serious. Loubens was lying terribly injured 1,200 feet underground, at the bottom of a shaft which active and experienced men had found very dangerous

Dr. André Mairey tends the injured Loubens on the floor of the cave. He risked his life to go down to a man he knew he could not save

Wearing the telephone set with which he could speak to the man on the end of the cable, Max Cosyns operates the winch used at the cave. After the disaster, it took twenty hours to get it going again

Labeyrie reaches the surface. Like the others, he hesitated to trust the cable

to negotiate. Even without an expert diagnosis, Cosyns had heard enough to know that Loubens's injuries must be spinal, and that immobility was necessary. Yet he had to be brought to the surface, and by equipment whose defects had already nearly killed him. Everything had been thought of for the Pierre St. Martin expedition. All its equipment was modern, from the electric winch and the Narvik tents down to its pressure cookers and vitamin tablets. Nothing had been overlooked except the elementary apparatus of emergency. There was neither spare winch nor cable; no ladders or wireless set; there was not even a stretcher. Loubens, lying a quarter of a mile away, was as inaccessible as if at the North Pole.

Nearby, men were shouting orders and counter-orders. Cosyns, whose calm never deserted him, shouldered his way through to the winch and called his mechanics. At noon the cable was pulled clear of the cave and its repair was started. It was to take twenty hours.

Down in the cave, Loubens's condition was unchanged. The men who watched him were torn by conflicting emotions: the desire to hear him speak was opposed to the fear that he would emerge from his coma to pain before the doctor with his drugs could reach him. While Tazieff and Occhialini kept watch, Labeyrie "listened out" on the telephone. Communication was difficult and for long periods non-existent. He learnt that everything possible was being done to devise a feasible method of hoisting Loubens.

Rescue Machine Starts Up

It was intensely cold underground. The men did all they could to keep Loubens warm. At 9 p.m., ten hours after the accident, there was still nothing definite from the surface. They had something to eat and decided to rest in turns.

In contrast to the bleak inactivity below, the day passed with great agitation at the surface. As soon as the news of the accident reached the valley, a complicated machine of rescue started turning. Half-way up the mountain the local *gendarmerie* installed a wireless unit which was linked to a radio van in Licq, where Loubens's father and wife waited. From Pau, sixty miles to the north-east, the French Air Force promised an aircraft to parachute medical supplies. The cave explorers' club at Mauleon, the nearest big town, rallied its members; twenty of them started for the Pierre St. Martin.

Arrangements to get a helicopter to transport Loubens from the surface to hospital were taken up at the highest level. No suitable machine existed in France, and the weather was too bad to allow one to fly from Britain. But the Americans in Germany agreed to pack and fly a Sikorski 55 to the nearest landing-ground at Monte-de-Marsan, a hundred miles to the north. From Spain and Belgium, from as far away as Italy, offers of help and telegrams of advice arrived in the little post office at Licq.

While these signs of human solidarity were being shown in France and beyond, the practical problem of hoisting Loubens was still unsolved, and a certain confusion was still apparent at the mouth of the cave. Some of the team were strongly against the winch taking any further part in the rescue, and had already made arrangements for another and simpler machine to be brought. A factory in Mauleon had been asked to produce three thousand feet of rope.

Wild Ideas Were Advanced

In the midst of protests and proposals, Cosyns went imperturbably on with his repairs. When he spoke, which was rarely, it was to point out that time was all-important; if others had different ideas, he said, let them produce them quickly and in tangible form. The argument was decisive. The loop of the cable was now being secured, not with one, but with several bolts; the pulleys that had given trouble were reinforced or replaced. To those who were unoccupied, the meticulous work was nerve-racking, and not the least of Cosyns's troubles were the fantastic suggestions put forward by the now considerable crowd of bystanders.

Dr. Mairey, when he could get the telephone to work, took reports on Loubens's condition. It was still stationary, Labeyrie told him. At 7.30, as the sun set, a Junkers 52 appeared from the north, and the whole camp, as if the aircraft alone could somehow be the means of saving Loubens, left the winch and climbed to the plateau. The Junkers dropped containers holding plasma and serums, bandages, drugs and a steel and canvas stretcher.

When night fell, Cosyns was still unsatisfied with the winch and cable, but hoped to have both ready during the night. This hope was disappointed. As if the elements themselves were against Loubens, a violent storm lashed the mountain at 11 p.m. and drove Cosyns and his mechanics to abandon the work and shelter in the cabin above. Five more hours were lost.

Work was resumed at 4 a.m.; by 6.30, Mairey was ready to descend. He was loaded with kit-bags containing medical equipment; he carried another spool of telephone wire; the stretcher was strapped across his back. It was by far the greatest weight to which the cable had been yet subjected, and nobody knew what would happen as Mairey swung into the cave.

Among the many brave men who had taken, or were to take, some part in the attempted rescue of Loubens, Dr. André Mairey, a strong, thick-set man, slow speaking and deliberate in movement, stood out conspicuously both by personality and example. Like the others, he deeply distrusted the cable on which he was to be the first to hang since Loubens's fall; unlike the others, he knew he was going down to a dying man. Yet he went, without hesitation and without bravado. If courage alone could have saved Loubens, no one who saw Mairey go need have had another moment of anxiety. His resolution did honour to them all.

Met By Three Anxious Men

Mairey's first attempt was stopped at once. The stretcher, awkwardly projecting from his back, fouled the narrow shaft when he was only twenty feet down. Mairey was withdrawn and his harness modified. An hour later, he went down again, this time with comparatively little trouble. At 9.10 he told the surface that he distinguished the torches of the men below; twenty minutes later he was greeted by Tazieff at the bottom.

Tazieff, Labeyrie and Occhialini, taking turns at Loubens's side, had passed the night cut off from the surface. They had known nothing of the storm or the confusion and the excitements of the parachuting. Their nerves already stretched, they had advanced extraordinary explanations for the silence. Only when they noticed the spool of telephone wire unrolling did they believe that Mairey was coming down. The doctor was greeted by three very anxious men and he examined Loubens immediately. His

expression told the others the worst. Loubens was dying. He had fractures of the skull and spine, a broken left arm, a broken jaw.

Working by the light of an acetylene lamp and two torches, Mairey gave an injection for the heart, then set the broken arm in splints and plaster. It was all he could do. He knew he was treating a lost man.

In normal circumstances, Loubens should have been kept absolutely still. Mairey was faced with the problem of hoisting his unconscious patient through a shaft of a thousand feet whose sides were studded with projections. The smallest shock against one of these would end any faint chance that Loubens had of survival.

While Mairey was being lowered, Cosyns, too, had been thinking of the difficulties. Their nature was explained to him by three doctors who had now arrived at the shaft top. The proposal that another man should be suspended with Loubens on the cable to guide him past the overhangs was ruled out. The shaft was too narrow, nor could the cable be trusted with the double weight. The only solution was to man the pit with volunteers posted at varying heights; these men, leaning from their platforms, could guide Loubens clear of the shaft's sides.

"Allowed To Be Heroic"

It meant something that had never been done before; it meant a deeper descent than any yet made by ladders alone, and it needed an almost inhuman daring. The men were willing to try, but there was nothing approaching the necessary length of ladders.

The problem was solved by the reappearance of the team of young explorers whose offers of assistance had been refused three days before the accident. They told Cosyns that they had the ladders, and were prepared to risk their lives for a man they had never seen. After a short conference, the young men, as a journalist expressed it, "were allowed to be heroic."

Helped by Norbert Casteret and led by their chief, Louis Balandraux, the five men went into the cave at noon. Roped together and passing their sixty-foot lengths of ladder from one to another, they groped their way down the slippery, vertical walls of the pit. Nine hours later they were in position: two at 270 feet, one at 400 feet, one at 480 feet, and Louis Balandraux at the incredible depth of 780 feet—the greatest depth ever reached by ladders alone.

Pinched on ledges of rock, some only a few inches wide, held only by the iron pickets they themselves drove in, drenched by freezing water and apt at any moment to be knocked to their deaths by falling rocks, they waited in the darkness for the hoist to begin. Their descent was heard by the men below—the first sign that something was being done at last; it brought unreasoning hope to Tazieff, Labeyrie and Occhialini.

Decision Had To Be Made

Knowing what he knew, it brought none to Dr. Mairey. He and his companions had worked for three hours to get Loubens in the steel and canvas stretcher. On the sloping, narrow slab of rock, the men had hardly room to move about; the operation had been long and difficult. At 9 p.m. it was completed. Loubens, his helmet fixed, and shrouded in canvas, lay with his arms crossed, strapped in the stretcher as firmly as his injuries would allow.

But now Mairey was faced with another and very grave problem. Should Loubens go up erect or head downwards? If erect, there was risk of jarring his head against projections; head down there was an equal danger of cerebral haemorrhage. Worried and discouraged, Mairey called the doctors at the surface and spoke to each in turn. None of the doctors consulted could come to a definite decision. Mairey thanked them, thought for a minute, and took the responsibility himself: Loubens would go up head first. He called Cosyns and told him the hoist could begin.

Before the cable could stretch, a new factor made its appearance. Loubens's breathing changed its rhythm, grew weaker. Mairey stopped the hoist and told Cosyns that Loubens was worse; he thought it advisable to give a transfusion of plasma. This took fifteen minutes. At ten o'clock the word to hoist was given again.

With it, the nervous tension of two days was broken. The fact that Loubens was about to leave the cave relieved the men of a crushing burden of anxiety. But as they waited for the hoist to begin, they noticed an alarming change in Loubens's condition. They could no longer hear him breathing. Mairey bent over him. Loubens was dead.

Mairey sent the word to the surface. He asked Cosyns to call at nine o'clock the next morning. Then the four men, staggering with fatigue, went down to the camp to sleep.

Loubens died at 10 p.m. on the fourteenth, after being in a coma for thirty-six hours. Since his fall on the morning of the thirteenth, all activity on the surface and in the cave below had been directed to bringing him alive to the surface. Now that he was dead, an entirely new and alarming situation arose: four living men remained in the cave.

At three o'clock in the morning, the first of the "ladder men" emerged from the shaft; the last, Louis Balandraux, arrived two hours later after climbing, by his physical strength alone, nearly eight hundred feet of ladder. As, bedraggled and exhausted, they stepped on to the surface, the spectators applauded.

At nine o'clock, Labeyrie called from below. He and the others had quickly decided that there was no question of hoisting Loubens's body for burial above. It would mean once again the very dangerous system of posting men in the shaft to guide the stretcher clear of fissures in which it might be inextricably stuck. They had decided to bury Loubens in the cave.

The burial took the whole day. In the evening, Loubens lay beneath a small pyramid of rocks. They made a cross of strips of luminous canvas. One of them burnt some words with the flame of an acetylene lamp on the rock where the dead man had pitched his tent: *"Here Marcel Loubens passed the last days of his courageous life."*

They Were Talked Round

Something of the confusion that the camp had seen when the accident happened was apparent during the day of the fifteenth. There were misunderstandings, and perhaps something more, between the surface and the men below, who hesitated to be hoisted by the cable that had killed their friend. Cosyns talked them round, patiently explaining the repairs done to the winch, and the impossibility of getting other apparatus without long delay. His point of view was accepted.

Labeyrie came up on the morning of the sixteenth. Controlled by Cosyns, who talked to him continually, he was lifted slowly. After six days spent below, and with the memory of the accident a few hours old, Labeyrie still had the courage and scientific curiosity to stop the winch more than once; he wanted to take specimens of rock formations in the shaft.

After another and very long inspection of the winch—it had overheated and broken a screw—and a check of the shaft where a pulley was sticking, Cosyns began hoisting Occhialini. The Italian emerged safely at 2 a.m. on the seventeenth.

On the morning of the seventeenth, unknown to Cosyns, Tazieff and Mairey continued the exploration they had broken off the day before Loubens's accident. They discovered what Loubens had been convinced existed — a third and even bigger cavern than the two already discovered. In honour of their dead companion they called it the "Marcel Loubens."

Tazieff wished to stay another day below, when he would have beaten the record for underground duration. But Mairey judged his physical condition to be too poor, and he consented to be hoisted at 5.15 p.m. The ascent was the most dramatic to date. At a thousand feet the winch gears jammed, leaving Tazieff suspended in a stream of icy water. It was the most serious breakdown yet experienced, and Cosyns needed a hundred feet of "slack" in the cable. Ten men supported the wire carrying Tazieff as he swung for more than two hours in the pit. When he emerged finally he had to be unhooked from the cable and carried to his tent.

Mairey alone remained below. He was brought up on the eighteenth, reaching the surface at 2 p.m. The last hoist was the first that had been effected without incident. For the men who had undertaken it, the adventure was over.

On August 25, one of Max Cosyns's theories was proved right. That day, the gorge of Kakouetta ran green with the fluoricine which Loubens had emptied into the subterranean stream thirteen days before. The discovery has great possibilities for water power. If these should ever be realized and a power dam is built on the Pierre St. Martin, it will be a memorial to Marcel Loubens and his courage, the skill and devotion of his companions, and the moving heroism of Doctor Mairey.

THE END

LIFE WITH FATHER

ONE DAY my father sent for me in his study. I could see he had received my school report. "This is pretty bad," he said. "Now I'm going to give you one of my own reports from the same school. Read it, and let it be an example to you." I did not notice the twinkle in his eye, but his report turned out to be just as bad as mine.

He had a delightful sense of the incongruous, and could draw comedy out of any situation. At a big show held at Olympia, his part in the parade was to march behind two majestic women representing Britannia and Columbia. But in the midst of the procession round the arena, an American boy came forward and presented him with a carved chair.

"What's it for?" Father asked.

"To sit on," the boy said, logically. So Father sat on it then and there, while officials rushed at them to eject the boy and his chair. It turned out to be an unauthorized presentation by the boy himself, who had carved the chair and thought that an opportune moment for presenting it had arrived.

Father once confided to me that his problem was living up to the position which had been thrust upon him by the movement he founded. I remember a big occasion in India, where it was planned that Mrs. Annie Besant should take part in a certain ceremony with him. When the moment arrived he commanded her, with all the dramatic force he could muster, to repeat the "creed" of the movement after him. But all that followed was an awkward pause. For the life of him, Father could not remember the words he had written himself. Fortunately, Mrs. Besant was able to prompt him out of the side of her mouth.

There was a wide difference in our ages—Father had retired as a lieutenant-general five years before I was born. Thinking that he might die before I reached manhood, he wrote me a series of letters, sealed them and marked each to be opened on my birthdays. They contained all the advice a father need give his son on such subjects as drinking, gambling and sex.

He was able to bridge the gap in our years with his insight into the psychology of boyhood. He went about with a sheath knife in his belt, and fired me with exciting tales of adventure in the veld. Our holidays we often spent camping, though sometimes the fun was marred by the necessity for keeping our site immaculate. Even the turf had to be brushed before we left.

Father taught us to stalk, and was stalked in his turn by my two sisters and me. Year after year he caught us with his April Fool tricks—bogus letters and false alarms.

Fishing he loved. I remember a black retriever who would jump about on the river bank, frightening away the fish. Once, to keep him quiet, Father put him on a lead, which he fastened to his belt. Soon after he hooked a trout, and the dog got so excited that he plunged into the water, dragging his master in as well. They emerged dripping but

triumphant, with the trout still on the end of the line.

Only after my father's death did I really appreciate his true greatness, and the humility and informality that went with it. A few years ago I visited Mafeking, where he had commanded the famous defence in the Boer War. A nun in the convent there showed me a bullet-scarred piano, and recalled Father's party piece with which he entertained the children—mimicking a *prima donna's* singing.

The school got a half holiday in honour of my visit. Father is certainly remembered in Mafeking.

For the names of this world-famous father and his son—and the complete photograph—turn to page 35

COMMANDO!

Continued from page 16

a truck and told Charlie to settle what I sensed to be some trouble.

Lord Glasgow called Charlie into his study. "Some eggs have been taken from the chicken house in the garden," he said, and produced a clue which had been picked up there—a bit of paper with "COMO 6" written on it. This happened to be the code name for No. 6 Troop, 3 Commando.

Charlie was aware that a signal scheme had taken place that morning in the castle grounds and, thinking quickly, blurted: "That must be the code for No. 6 Commando, sir! I'll get in touch with them right away!"

Lord Glasgow never did hear any more of this—but the culprits from 6 Troop did. They were duly punished.

Lord Glasgow put his entire estate at our disposal and followed our doings with the greatest possible interest. One day he remarked that he ought to have a sixty-foot Scotch pine cut down. It was old and possibly dangerous. Charlie Head suggested that the unit's demolition experts would gladly blow the tree down.

"Could you do it without damaging any of my valuable shrubs?" Lord Glasgow asked.

Charlie snorted. "Our experts could drop it within six inches of a given position," he said.

Highly Explosive

Next morning our demolition men cut a V into the giant pine tree and packed it with explosives. When the time came to lay the gelignite, two demolition officers argued over the amount needed. They finally agreed, but I thought with Charlie that they had set too small an amount. A failure was unthinkable. Accordingly, Charlie sneaked out early during lunch and added a quantity of explosive to that already "planted" in the tree. He also added detonators and the Bickford fuse.

After lunch, Lord and Lady Glasgow with several guests strolled out to witness the expert job of demolition. They stood back some distance from the tree while Charlie and I lit the fuse—a simple job for an expert but demanding an entire box of matches from us. We ran back to the others.

The fuse, which Charlie had made much too long, seemed to take hours to burn through. Then, with the loudest bang I have ever heard, the pine went sailing in clouds of black smoke at least forty feet in the air. It fell with a crash right into Lord Glasgow's prize shrubs. The force of the explosion had knocked us all—the earl and his countess, their guests, Charlie and myself—flat on the ground. As we picked ourselves up we could hear the tinkling of glass.

A moment later one of the maids came running out. "My Lord! My Lord! The windows are broken!"

The situation was too much for me. I turned to my brother officer. "I must get back to the office, Charlie," I said, trying to sound calm. "Just clean up here, will you?"

He did. The final count of smashed panes of glass was 132. Glass was scarce in those days but, as a scrounger, Charlie had no equal. He managed to replace every one.

At about this time I perpetrated a most frightful indiscretion. Fortunately, it never came to light. We often had signal schemes, and Charlie and I thought it would add zest to our training if we reported the movements of all shipping on the Clyde on the unit wireless sets, which had a radius of only a few miles. Our signallers did this very efficiently.

Two days later I was horrified to receive a general warning, addressed to units all over Britain, that the material put out over our type of wireless set was capable of being picked up by powerful German receivers. We had reported the movements of three large convoys. I was very worried.

A Sinking Feeling

Next day Charlie and I called round at the Gournock Naval Operations Room. After a while, very casually, I asked, "Any sinkings today?"

There was none. I restrained a tremendous sigh of relief. For the next several days we did the same thing.

Every day the report was the same: no sinkings. Finally, we were able to breathe again. If we had been discovered, it would have meant a court martial and dismissal from our appointments. In that case, I should have missed some of the best adventures of the war.

During periods of relative inactivity, No. 3 Commando used to attach parties to the Royal Navy for duties on Atlantic convoy and anti-submarine work. This gave our men operational experience. It also caused us all to take a harsh view of the alleged help that German agents in Ireland were giving to German U-boats and planes under and over the Atlantic.

One night, I was drinking beer in the Victoria Hotel at Largs with three of our officers—Ruxton, Bradley and Sam Corry, our doctor. All three were Irish, and Buck Ruxton, who had been out on Atlantic patrols, was fuming over recent sinkings.

"I'm convinced," he said, "that the information comes from Ireland. What would you think of six of us taking leave to Dublin and blowing up the German Embassy?"

Things were very quiet just then, and the idea attracted me. Six months had gone by since Lofoten, and there was nothing else in sight. Lofty King and Charlie Head were let in on the scheme, and we actually planned it as an operation and would have gone ahead with it. However, by the greatest of good fortune, the project for the Vaagso raid [described by Brig. Durnford Slater in JOHN BULL, March 7] was put up to me that same week, and our efforts were diverted to a more legitimate form of warfare.

The Dieppe Project

The success of the Vaagso raid gave a boost to our already high morale, and left us thirsting for further action. Early in July, 1942, I was sent for from London, where I saw Robert Laycock, who had taken the brigade over from Charles Haydon. "John, there's a big operation on against Dieppe," Laycock said. "We're going to use No. 3 Commando on the east flank and No. 4 on the west flank."

I was delighted, and said so.

"There's a very practical reason for choosing you for the east," he continued. "You may have to climb some pretty steep cliffs and you've had the training for it."

Our task, he went on, would be to destroy or put out of action a large coast defence battery which commanded the entire anchorage off Dieppe. The plan for the Dieppe raid was that the 2nd Canadian Division should attack the town frontally, while No. 4 Commando was detailed to take a battery west of the town.

NEXT WEEK: How No. 3 Commando stormed the cliffs of Dieppe

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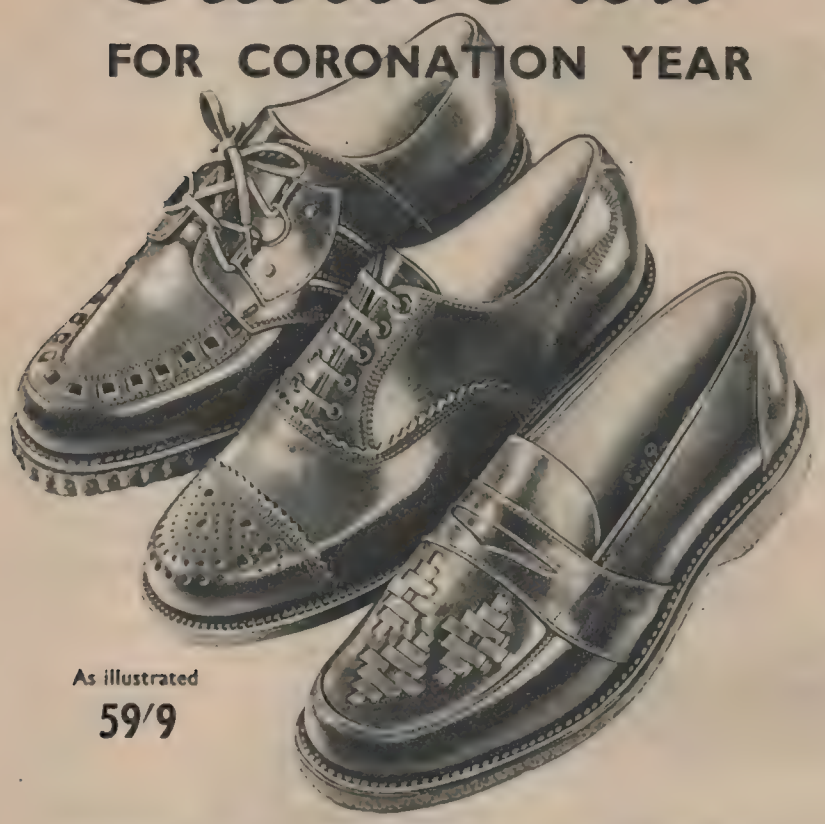

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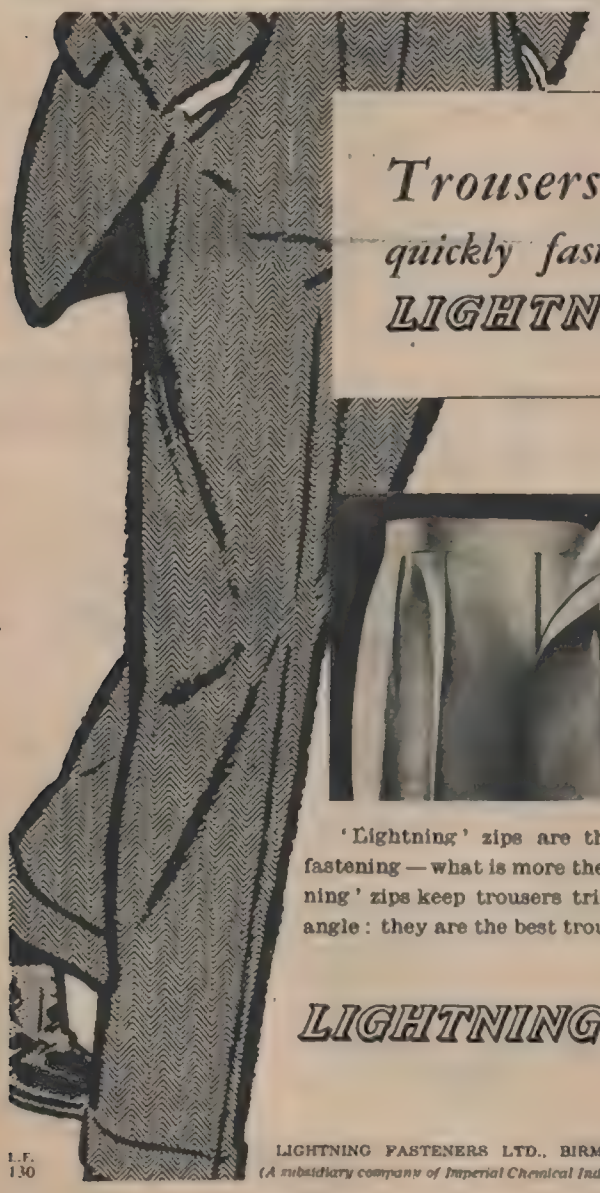

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ICI

AFTER THE FUNERAL

Continued from page 8

go to the inquest or be bothered by business of any kind connected with Cora's estate. I want to forget the whole thing. What happens, by the way, to Cora's share of Richard's money? Comes to me, I suppose?"

Murmuring something about clearing away tea, Maude left the room.

Timothy lay back in his chair and said: "Good thing to get rid of the women. Now we can talk business without any silly interruptions."

"The sum left in trust for Cora," said Mr. Entwhistle, "goes equally to you and the nieces and nephew."

"But look here"— Timothy's cheeks assumed a purplish hue of indignation. "Surely I'm her next of kin? Only surviving brother."

Mr. Entwhistle explained with some care the exact provisions of Richard Abernethie's will, reminding Timothy that he had had a copy sent him.

"Don't expect me to understand all that legal jargon, do you?" said Timothy ungratefully. "You lawyers! Matter of fact, I couldn't believe it when Maude came home and told me the gist of it. Thought she'd got it wrong. Women are never clear-headed. Best woman in the world, Maude—but women don't understand finance. I don't believe Maude even realizes that if Richard hadn't died when he did, we might have had to clear out of here. Fact! But it's all plain sailing now—and a great relief. Get the house painted, get a couple of really good men on the garden—you can get them at a price—re-stock the rose garden completely. And—where was I——"

"Detailing your future plans."

"Yes, yes—but I mustn't bother you with all that. What did hurt me—and hurt me cruelly—were the terms of Richard's will."

"Indeed?" Mr. Entwhistle looked inquiring. "They were not—as you expected?"

"I should say they weren't! Naturally, after Mortimer's death, I assumed that Richard would leave everything to *me*."

"Ah—did he ever indicate that to you?"

"He never said so—not in so many words. Reticent sort of chap, Richard. But he asked himself here—not long after Mortimer's death. Wanted to talk over family affairs generally. We discussed young George and the girls and their husbands. Wanted to know my views—not that I could tell him much. I'm an invalid and I don't get about, and Maude and I live out of the world. Rotten, silly marriages both of those girls made, if you ask me. Well, I ask you, Entwhistle—naturally I thought he was consulting me as the head of the family after he was gone, and naturally I thought the control of the money would be mine. Dash it all, Entwhistle, I'm an Abernethie—the last Abernethie. Full control should have been left in my hands."

In his excitement Timothy had kicked aside his rug and had sat up in his chair. There were no signs of weakness or fragility about him. He looked, Mr. Entwhistle thought, a perfectly healthy man, even if a slightly excitable one. Moreover, the old lawyer realized very clearly that Timothy Abernethie had probably always been secretly jealous of his brother Richard. They had been sufficiently alike for Timothy to resent his brother's strength of character and firm grasp of affairs. When Richard had died, Timothy had exulted in the prospect of succeeding at this late date to the power to control the destinies of others.

Richard Abernethie had not given him that power. Had he thought of doing so and then decided against it?

A sudden squalling of cats in the garden brought Timothy up out of his chair. Rushing to the window, he threw up the sash and bawled out, "Stop it, you!" and picking up a large book, hurled it out at them.

"Beastly cats," he grumbled, returning to his visitor. "Ruin the flower beds and I can't stand that damned yowling."

Maude came back into the room and said firmly: "I think, dear, Mr. Entwhistle has been with you quite long enough. You really *must* rest. If you have settled everything——"

"Oh, we've settled things. I leave it all to you, Entwhistle. Let me know when they catch the fellow—if they ever do."

Hercule Poirot gestured hospitably to a chair by the fire. On one side of the room a table was laid for two. Mr. Entwhistle sighed as he sat down.

"You have returned from the country this morning?" Poirot asked.

"Yes. I gave you the gist of it on the phone. It's a long, rambling story, I'm afraid."

"Then we will not have it until after we have dined. Georges?"

The efficient Georges materialized with some *pâté de foie gras* accompanied by hot toast in a napkin.

"We will have our *pâté* by the fire," said Poirot. "Afterwards we will move to the table."

It was an hour and a half later that Mr. Entwhistle stretched himself comfortably out in his chair and sighed a contented sigh.

"You certainly know how to do yourself well, Poirot. Trust a Frenchman."

"I am a Belgian. But the rest of your remark applies. At my age the chief pleasure, almost the *only* pleasure that still remains, is the pleasure of the table. Mercifully, I have an excellent stomach."

"Ah," murmured Mr. Entwhistle.

They had dined off a *sole Véronique*, followed by *escalope de veau Milanaise*, proceeding to *poire flambée* with ice cream.

They had drunk a Pouilly-Fuissé followed by a Corton and a very good port now reposed at Mr. Entwhistle's elbow. Poirot, who did not care for port, was sipping Crème de Cacao.

"I don't know," murmured Mr. Entwhistle reminiscently, "how you manage to get hold of an escalope like that! It melted in the mouth!"

"I have a friend who is a Continental butcher. For him I solve a small domestic problem. He is appreciative—and ever since then he is most sympathetic to me in the matters of the stomach."

"A domestic problem." Mr. Entwhistle sighed. "I wish you had not reminded me. . . . This is such a perfect moment."

"Prolong it, my friend. We will have presently the *demi-tasse* and the fine brandy; and then, when digestion is peacefully under way, *then* you shall tell me all."

The clock struck the half hour after nine before Mr. Entwhistle stirred in his chair. The psychological moment had come. He no longer felt reluctant to bring forth his perplexities; he was eager to do so.

"I don't know," he said, "whether I'm making the most colossal fool of myself. In any case I don't see that

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IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

"I hoped you'd get one like that—seen a lot of 'em lately"

there's anything that can possibly be done. But I'd like to put the facts before you, and I'd like to know what you think."

He paused for a moment or two, then, in his dry meticulous way, he told his story. His trained legal brain enabled him to put the facts clearly, to leave nothing out, and to add nothing extraneous. It was a clear, succinct account, and as such appreciated by the little elderly man with the egg-shaped head who sat listening to him.

WHEN he had finished there was a pause. Mr. Entwhistle was prepared to answer some questions, but for some few moments no question came. Hercule Poirot was reviewing the evidence.

He said at last: "It seems very clear. You have in your mind the suspicion that your friend, Richard Abernethie, may have been murdered? That suspicion, or assumption, rests on the basis of one thing only—*the words spoken by Cora Lansquenet at Richard Abernethie's funeral.* Take those away—and there is nothing left. The fact that she herself was murdered the day afterwards *may* be the purest coincidence. It is true that Richard Abernethie died suddenly, but he was attended by a reputable doctor who knew him well, and that doctor had no suspicions and gave a death certificate. Was Richard buried or cremated?"

"Cremated—according to his own request."

"Yes, that is the law. And it means that a second doctor signed the certificate—but there would be no difficulty about that. So we come back to the essential point, *what Cora Lansquenet said.* You were there and you heard her. She said: *'But he was murdered, wasn't he?'*"

"Yes."

"And the real point is—that you believe she was speaking the truth."

The lawyer hesitated for a moment, then he said: "Yes, I do."

"Why? Is it because, already, deep down, you had an uneasiness about the way Richard died?"

The lawyer shook his head. "No, no, not in the least."

"Then it is because of *her*—of Cora herself. You knew her well?"

"I had not seen her for—oh—over twenty years."

"Would you have known her if you had met her in the street?"

Mr. Entwhistle reflected.

"I might have passed her by in the street without recognizing her. She was a thin slip of a girl when I saw her last and she had turned into a plump, shabby, middle-aged woman. But I think that the moment I spoke to her face to face I should have recognized her. She wore her hair in the same way, a bang cut straight across the forehead, and she had a trick of peering up at you through her fringe like a rather shy animal, and she had a very characteristic, abrupt way of talking, and a way of putting her head on one side and then coming out with something quite outrageous. She had *character*, you see, and character is always highly individual."

"And that characteristic remained unchanged. Richard Abernethie was murdered—so Cora at once mentioned the fact."

Mr. Entwhistle stirred. "You think he *was* murdered?"

"Oh, no, no, my friend, we cannot go so fast. We agree on this—Cora *thought* he had been murdered. She was quite sure he had been murdered. Now tell me, when she said what she did, was there, at once, a kind of chorus of protest—that is right?"

"Quite right."

"And she then became confused, abashed, and retreated from the position, saying—as far as you can remember—something like *'But I thought—from what he told me——'*"

The lawyer nodded. "I wish I could remember more clearly. But I am fairly sure of that. She used the words 'he told me' or 'he said'——"

"And the matter was then smoothed over and everyone spoke of something else. You can remember, looking back, no special expression on anyone's face? Anything—shall we say—*unusual?*"

"No."

"And the very next day, *Cora is killed*—and you ask yourself: can it be cause and effect?"

The lawyer stirred. "I suppose that seems to you quite fantastic?"

"Not at all," said Poirot. "Given that the original assumption is correct, it is logical. The murder of Richard Abernethie has been committed, all has gone off smoothly—and suddenly it appears that there is one person who has a knowledge of the truth! Clearly that person must be silenced as quickly as possible."

"Then you do think that—it was murder?"

POIROT said gravely: "I think, *mon cher*, exactly as you thought—that there is a case for investigation. Have you taken any steps? You have spoken of these matters to the police?"

"No." Mr. Entwhistle shook his head. "It did not seem to me that any good purpose could be achieved. My position is that I represent the family. If Richard Abernethie was murdered, there seems only one method by which it could be done."

"By poison?"

"Exactly. And the body has been cremated. There is now no evidence available. That is why, Poirot, I have come to *you*."

"Who was in the house at the time of his death?"

"An old butler who has been with

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him for years, a cook and a housemaid. It would seem, perhaps, as though it must necessarily be one of them——"

"Ah! do not try to pull the wool upon my eyes. This Cora, she knows Richard Abernethie was killed, yet she acquiesces in the hushing up. She says, *'I think you are all quite right.'* Therefore it *must* be one of the family who is concerned, someone whom the victim himself might prefer not to have openly accused. Otherwise, since Cora was fond of her brother, she would not agree to let the sleeping murderer lie. You agree to that, yes?"

"It was the way I reasoned—yes," confessed Mr. Entwhistle. "Though how many of the family could possibly——"

Poirot cut him short. "Where poison is concerned there are all sorts of possibilities. It must, presumably, have been a narcotic of some sort if he died in his sleep and if there were no suspicious appearances. Possibly he was already having some narcotic administered to him."

"In any case," said Mr. Entwhistle, "the *how* hardly matters. We shall never be able to prove anything."

"In the case of Richard Abernethie, no. But the murder of Cora Lansquenet is different. Once we know 'who' then evidence ought to be possible to get." He added with a sharp glance, "And you have been inquiring . . . ?"

"My purpose was mainly, I think, *elimination*. It is distasteful to me to think that one of the Abernethie family is a murderer. I still can't quite believe it. I hoped that by a few apparently idle questions I could exonerate certain members of the family beyond question. Perhaps, who knows, *all* of them? In which case, Cora would have been wrong in her assumption and her own death could be ascribed to some casual prowler who broke in. After all, the issue is very simple. What were the members of the Abernethie family doing on the afternoon that Cora Lansquenet was killed?"

"*Eh bien,*" said Poirot, "what were they doing?"

MR. ENTWHISTLE cleared his throat. "George Crossfield was at Hurst Park races. Rosamund Shane was out shopping in London. Her husband was fixing up a deal about an option on a play. Susan and Gregory Banks were at home all day. Timothy Abernethie, who is an invalid, was at his home in Yorkshire, and his wife was driving herself home from Enderby."

Hercule Poirot nodded. "And is it all true?"

"I simply don't know, Poirot. George *may* have been at Hurst Park races, but I do not think he was. He was rash enough to boast that he had backed a couple of winners. I asked him the names of the winners, and he gave the names of two horses without any apparent hesitation. Both of them, I found, had been heavily tipped on the day in question and one had duly won. The other, though an odds-on favourite, had unaccountably failed even to get a place."

"Interesting. Had this George any urgent need for money at the time of his uncle's death?"

"It is my impression that his need was very urgent. I have no evidence for saying so, but I strongly suspect that he has been speculating with his clients' funds and that he was in danger of prosecution."

Poirot nodded. "And the others?"

"Rosamund is a lovely nit-wit. I really cannot see her smashing Cora's head in with a hatchet! Her husband, Michael Shane, is something of a dark horse—he's a man with ambition and also a man of overweening vanity, I should say—but really I know very little about him. I have no reason to suspect him of a brutal crime or of a carefully planned poisoning, but until I know that he really was doing what he says he was doing I cannot rule him out."

"But you have no doubts about the wife?"

"No—no—there is a certain rather startling callousness. . . . But no, I really cannot envisage the hatchet. She is a fragile-looking creature."

"And beautiful!" said Poirot with a faint, cynical smile. "And the other niece?"

"Susan? She is a very different type from Rosamund—a girl of remarkable ability, I should say. She and her husband were at home together that day. I said—falsely—that I had tried to get them on the telephone on the afternoon in question. Greg said very quickly that the telephone had been out of order all day."

"So again it is not conclusive. You cannot eliminate as you hoped to do. Tell me about your visit to the older generation."

THE solicitor described his visit to Timothy and Maude at some length. Poirot summarized the result.

"So Mrs. Abernethie is a good mechanic. She knows all about the inside of a car. And Mr. Abernethie is not the invalid he likes to think himself. He goes out for walks and is, according to you, capable of vigorous action. He is also a bit of an egomaniac and he resented his brother's success and superior character. Yes. What of the sixth beneficiary?"

"Helen? Mrs. Leo? I do not suspect her for a moment. In any case, her innocence will be easy to prove. She was at Enderby. With three servants in the house."

"*Eh bien*, my friend," said Poirot. "Let us be practical. What do you want me to do?"

"I want to know the truth, Poirot. I know you don't take cases any more, but I ask you to take this one. This is a matter of business. I will be responsible for your fees."

Poirot grinned. "Money. . . . But I will admit, your problem interests me. . . . One thing, my friend, had better be done by you. After that, I will occupy myself of everything. But I think it will be best if you yourself seek out the doctor who attended Mr. Richard Abernethie. He will speak more freely to you than to me. Ask him about Mr. Abernethie's illness. Find out what medicines Mr. Abernethie was taking at the time of his death and before. Find out if Richard Abernethie ever said anything to his doctor about fancying himself being poisoned. By the way, this Miss Gilchrist is sure that he used the term *poisoned* in talking to his sister?"

Mr. Entwhistle reflected.

"It was the word she used—but she is the type of witness who often changes the actual words used, because she is convinced she is keeping to the sense of them. If Richard had said he was afraid someone wanted to kill him, Miss Gilchrist might have assumed poison because she connected his fears with those of an aunt of hers who thought her food was being tampered with. I can take up the point with her again some time."

"Yes. Or I will do so." He paused and then said in a different voice: "Has it occurred to you, my friend, that your Miss Gilchrist may be in some danger herself?"

"Miss Gilchrist in danger? Good heavens!" Mr. Entwhistle leaned forward in some alarm. "Do you really think so?"

Poirot nodded impatiently.

"But yes. Cora voiced her suspicions on the day of the funeral. The question in the murderer's mind will be, did she voice them to anybody when she first heard of Richard's death? And the most likely person for her to have spoken to about them will be Miss Gilchrist. I think, *mon cher*, that she had better not remain alone in that cottage."

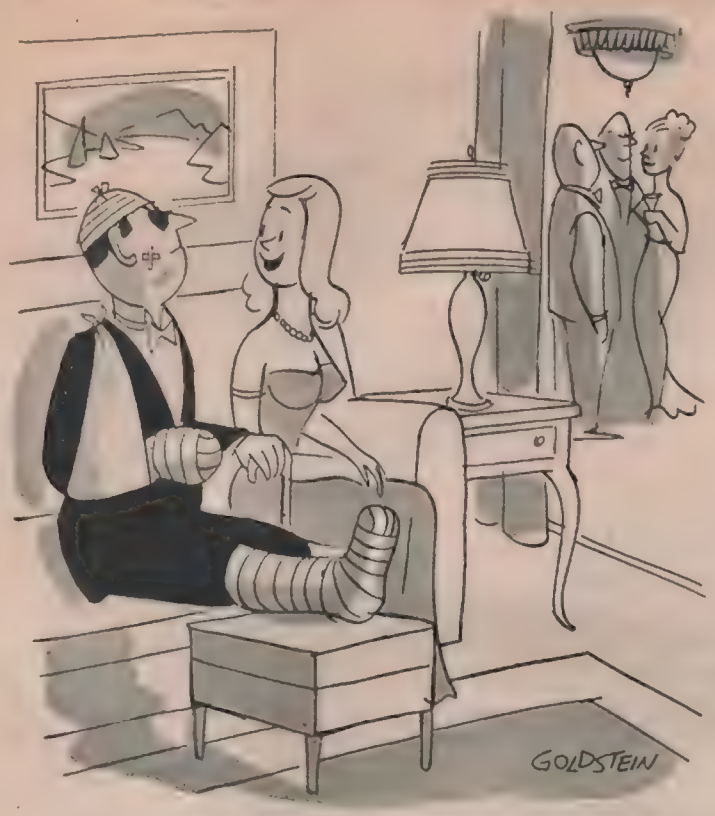
"I believe Susan is going down. She wants to look through Cora's things."

"I see. . . . I see. . . . Well, my friend, do what I have asked of you. You might also prepare Mrs. Leo Abernethie for the possibility that I may arrive in the house. From now on I occupy myself of everything."

And Poirot twirled his moustaches with enormous energy.

* * *

Mr. Entwhistle looked at Dr. Larraby thoughtfully. "I want to consult you on a very delicate matter," he said. "You may be offended, but I sincerely hope not. You are a sensible man and you will realize, I'm



"Is it true, Mr. Remingly, that many of the characters in your book are real people?"

sure, that a—er—preposterous suggestion is best dealt with by finding a reasonable answer and not by condemning it out of hand. It concerns my client, the late Mr. Abernethie. I'll ask you my question flat out. Are you *absolutely certain* that he died what is termed a natural death?"

Dr. Larraby's good-humoured, rubicund, middle-aged face turned in astonishment on his questioner. "What on earth—of course he did. I gave a certificate, didn't I? If I hadn't been satisfied——"

Mr. Entwhistle cut in adroitly: "Naturally, naturally. I assure you that I am not assuming anything to the contrary. But I would be glad to have your positive assurance—in face of the—er—rumours that are flying around."

"Rumours? What rumours?"

"One doesn't know quite how these things start," said Mr. Entwhistle mendaciously. "But my feeling is that they should be stopped—authoritatively, if possible."

"Abernethie was a sick man. He was suffering from a disease that would have proved fatal within, I should say, at the earliest, two years. I admit that I did not expect his death to come so soon, or indeed, so suddenly, but the human factor is always incalculable."

"I understand all that. I am not doubting your diagnosis. Mr. Abernethie was, shall we say—rather melodramatically, I'm afraid — under sentence of death. All I'm asking you is, is it quite impossible that a man, knowing or suspecting that he is doomed, might of his own accord shorten that period of life? Or that someone else might do it for him?"

DR. LARRABY frowned. "Suicide, you mean? Richard Abernethie wasn't a suicidal type."

"I see. You can assure me, medically speaking, that such a suggestion is impossible?"

The doctor stirred uneasily. "I wouldn't use the word impossible. He died in his sleep, as people often do. There was no reason to suspect suicide. If one were to demand an autopsy every time a man who is seriously ill died in his sleep——"

The doctor's face was getting redder and redder. Mr. Entwhistle hastened to interpose. "Of course. Of course. But if there *had* been evidence—evidence of which you yourself were not aware? If, for instance, he had said something to someone——"

"Indicating that he was contemplating suicide? Did he? I must say it surprises me."

"But if it *were* so—my case is purely hypothetical, and I suppose one must not rule it out—what could have caused death? What kind of a drug, I mean?"

"Several. Some kind of a narcotic would be indicated. There was no sign of cyanosis; the attitude was quite peaceful."

"He had sleeping draughts or pills? Something of that kind?"

"Yes. I had prescribed Slumberyl—a very safe and dependable hypnotic. He did not take it every night. And he only had a small bottle of tablets at a time."

"What else had you prescribed for him?"

"Various things—a medicine containing a small quantity of morphia to be taken when he had an attack of pain. Some vitamin capsules. An indigestion mixture."

Mr. Entwhistle interrupted. "Vitamin capsules? I think I was once prescribed a course of those. Small, round capsules of gelatine."

"Yes. Containing adexoline."

"Could anything else have been introduced into one of those capsules?"

"Something lethal, you mean?" The doctor was looking more and more surprised. "But surely no man would ever—look here, Entwhistle, what are you getting at? My God, man, are you suggesting *murder*?"

"I don't quite know what I'm suggesting. . . . I just want to know what would be *possible*."

"But what evidence have you for even suggesting such a thing?"

"I haven't any evidence," said Mr. Entwhistle in a tired voice. "Mr. Abernethie is dead—and the person to whom he spoke is also dead. The whole thing is rumour—vague, unsatisfactory rumour, and I want to scotch it if I can. If you tell me that no one could possibly have poisoned Abernethie in any way whatsoever, I'll be delighted! It would be a big weight off my mind, I can assure you."

Dr. Larraby got up and walked up and down.

"I can't tell you what you want me to tell you," he said at last. "I wish I could. Of course it could have been done. Anybody could have extracted the oil from a capsule and replaced it

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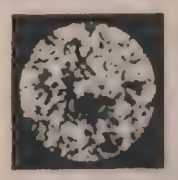

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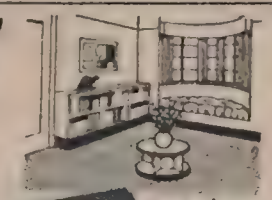

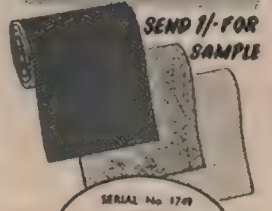

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"Well, the brains trust are agreed on that one—they haven't a clue"

with—say—pure nicotine or half a dozen other things. Or something could have been put in his food or drink. But let me get this straight, Entwhistle. Someone claims that Abernethie told her—it was a woman, I suppose—that someone was trying to kill him?"

Cornered, Mr. Entwhistle reluctantly told the tale of Cora's remark at the funeral. Dr. Larraby's face lightened.

"My dear fellow. I shouldn't pay any attention! The woman's at a certain time of life—craving for sensation, unbalanced, unreliable—might say anything. They do, you know!"

Mr. Entwhistle resented the doctor's early assumption.

"You may be quite right," he said, rising. "Unfortunately, we can't tackle her on the subject, as she's been murdered herself."

"What's that—murdered?" Dr. Larraby looked as though he had grave suspicions of Mr. Entwhistle's own stability of mind.

"You've probably read about it in the paper. Mrs. Lansquenet at Lytchett St. Mary in Berkshire."

"Of course—I'd no idea she was a relation of Richard Abernethie's!" Dr. Larraby was looking quite shaken.

BACK at Enderby, Mr. Entwhistle decided to talk to Lanscombe. He started by asking the old butler what his plans were.

"Mrs. Leo has asked me to stay on here until the house is sold, sir, and I'm sure I shall be very pleased to oblige her. We are all very fond of Mrs. Leo." He sighed. "I feel it very much, sir, if you will excuse me mentioning it, that the house has to be sold. I've been with Mr. Richard. . . ."

"I know," said Mr. Entwhistle. "It's a hard new world for us old fellows. I wish I'd seen more of my old friend before he went. How did he seem those last few months?"

"Well, he wasn't himself, sir. Not since Mr. Mortimer's death."

"No, it broke him up. And then he was a sick man—sick men have strange fancies sometimes. I imagine Mr. Abernethie suffered from that sort of thing in his last days. He spoke of enemies sometimes, of somebody's wishing to do him harm, perhaps? He may even have thought his food was being tampered with?"

Old Lanscombe looked surprised—surprised and offended. "I cannot recall anything of that kind, sir."

Mr. Entwhistle slid gently to another subject.

"He had some of his family down to stay with him, didn't he, before he died? His nephew and his two nieces and their husbands?"

"Yes, sir, that is so."

"Was he satisfied with those visits? Or was he disappointed?"

Lanscombe's eyes became remote, his old back stiffened.

"I really could not say, sir."

"I think you could, you know," said Mr. Entwhistle gently. "It's not your place to say anything of that kind—that's what you really mean. But there are times when one has to do violence to one's sense of what is fitting. I was one of your master's oldest friends. That is why I am asking you for your opinion as a *man*, not as a butler."

Lanscombe was silent for a moment, then he said, "As a matter of personal opinion——"

"Yes, yes, that is understood."

"The master, sir, was very much disappointed after Mr. George had been here. . . . He had hoped, I think, that Mr. George might resemble Mr. Mortimer. Mr. George, if I may say so, did not come up to standard."

Lanscombe paused and then went on: "Then the young ladies came with their husbands. Miss Susan he took to at once—a very spirited and handsome young lady, but it's my opinion he couldn't abide her husband. Young ladies make funny choices nowadays, sir."

"And the other couple?"

"I couldn't say much about that. A very pleasant and good-looking young pair. I think the master enjoyed having them here—but——" the old man hesitated.

"I quite understand. Now after these visits, Mr. Abernethie himself went away—first to his brother, and afterwards to his sister, Mrs. Lansquenet."

"That I did not know, sir. I mean, he mentioned to me that he was going to Mr. Timothy and afterwards to Something St. Mary."

"That is right. Can you remember anything he said on his return?"

Lanscombe reflected. "I really don't know. Of course, he was glad to be back. Travelling and staying in strange houses tired him very much—that I do remember his saying."

"Nothing else?"

Lanscombe frowned. "The master used to—well, to *murmur*, if you get my meaning—speaking to me and yet more to himself, hardly noticing I was there, because he knew me so well. . . ."

"Knew you and trusted you, yes."

"But my recollection is very vague as to what he said. Something about he couldn't think what he'd done with his money—that was Mr. Timothy, I take it. And then he said something about 'Women can be fools in ninety-nine different ways but be pretty shrewd in the hundredth.' Oh, yes, and he said, 'You can only say what you really think to someone of your own generation. They don't think you're fancying things as the younger ones do.' And later he said—but I don't know in what connection—'It's not very nice to have to set traps for people, but I don't see what else I can do.' But I think it possible, sir, that he may have been thinking of the second gardener—a question of the peaches being taken."

HOWEVER, Mr. Entwhistle did not think it was the second gardener who had been in Richard Abernethie's mind. After a few more questions he let Lanscombe go and reflected on what he had learned. Nothing, really—nothing, that is, that he had not deduced before. Yet there were suggestive points. It was not his sister-in-law, Maude, but his sister Cora of whom Richard had been thinking when he made the remark about women who were fools and yet shrewd. And it was

to her he had confided his "fancies." And he had spoken of setting a trap. For whom?

Mr. Entwhistle had meditated a good deal over how much he should tell Helen. In the end he decided to take her wholly into his confidence. They took a stroll together on the terrace.

First he thanked her for sorting out Richard's things and for making various household arrangements.

"I am going to ask you if it would be possible for you to remain here until the house is sold. Or would it be a great inconvenience?"

"No—actually it would suit me very well. I don't want to go to Cyprus until May, and I much prefer being here to being in London as I had planned. I love this house, you know. Leo loved it, and we were always happy when we were here together."

"There is another reason why I should be grateful if you would stay on. There is a friend of mine, a man called Hercule Poirot——"

Helen said sharply: "Hercule Poirot? Then you think——"

"You know of him?"

"Yes. Some friends of mine—but I imagined that he was dead."

"He is very much alive. Not young, of course."

"No, he could hardly be young." She spoke mechanically. Her face was white and strained. She said with an effort: "You think — that Cora was right? That Richard was—*murdered?*"

MR. ENTWHISTLE unburdened himself. It was a pleasure to unburden himself to Helen with her clear, calm mind.

"Poirot," he told her, "is a man of great originality and he has something really approaching genius. He understands perfectly what we need —assurance that the whole thing is a mare's nest."

"And suppose it isn't?"

"What makes you say that?" asked Mr. Entwhistle sharply.

"I don't know. I've been uneasy. . . . Not just about what Cora said that day—something else. Something that I felt at the time to be—*wrong.*"

He turned to her. "Wrong? In what way?"

She shook her head. "That's just it. I don't know."

"You mean it was something about one of the people in the room?"

"Yes—something of that kind. But I don't know who or what—Oh! that sounds absurd."

"Not at all. It is interesting—very interesting. You are not a fool, Helen. If you noticed something, that something has significance."

"Yes, but I can't remember what it *was*. The more I think——"

"Don't think. That is the wrong way to bring anything back. Let it go. Sooner or later it will flash into your mind. And when it does—let me know—at once."

"I will."

To be continued next week

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Being human, we can't help getting emotional about little things at times, but we don't have to make them the centre of our mental life. What wisdom would not approve, the will should squelch hard.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

THE MAN WITH A PRICE ON HIS HEAD

Continued from page 11

right-hand room had a door that fitted badly. He kicked it open and was astonished to see a woman lying on the floor with a child sitting up beside her —a little girl who was all eyes. The woman under the blankets propped herself up on her elbow.

"So, you are back. What do you want now? Leave us, leave us to die in our home place. Leave us so that our man, when he comes back, will find our bones."

Jan fell back. Then it came to him: she thought he was a British soldier. "Bring in the others," she cried weakly, "bring in your men and let them watch a Boer woman die."

"*Nee,*" he said, "*nee, Mevrou, ek is nie Engels nie.* I am a Boer who has escaped from the British. I am Jannie Moolman."

"Moolman," she said, "Jannie Moolman. The man with a price on his head? The man who blew the bridge at Klipdrift?"

"*Ja,* I have escaped. You are starving," he said.

"*Ja,* we are starving. Bring us water. We can walk no longer. Before God," she said, "walk! We cannot even stand." She pointed to a tin cup. He took it to the spring. This was something. *Ja,* this was a devil of a thing. He looked at Waterberg, a blue haze fifty miles to the north. No, not now, now it was five hundred miles. He went back and gave water to the child. The woman was too weak even to hold the cup. "Now tell me," he said.

"*Ja,*" she said, "I will tell you. It was a month ago that they came. I saw them coming. They had assegais in their hands."

"Assegais?"

"*Ja,*" she said, "long horse assegais."

"Ah," he said, "lances."

SHE nodded. "*Ja.* Their points glittered in the sun. I knew what they would do, so I took my child and some biltong and rusks, some blankets, and hid in the bush. *Meneer,* I saw them burn my house as I lay and watched. They took the cattle and the horses. In three hours it was done. In three hours, *meneer,* the work of a lifetime went up in flames. Then we came back. By some accident, my man made the ceiling on this room very thick. It was built to hold against the Kaffirs in the old days. I was his second wife. This was the first room of the house. Then, when things were more quiet, he built the other rooms."

"*Ja,*" Jannie Moolman said.

"We lived on what I had saved. I killed and ate the cats. *Twee mooi katte, meneer.* I killed them when they came home, with a club. The door was burned, so I took one from the fowl hock and hung it here. Then we lived on water. *Meneer,* for fifteen days we have had nothing but water."

"I have no food," Jan said. "I was travelling light. They thought I was an orderly with a message, and so I carried nothing."

"*Ja,*" she said, "you have no food. But there's game here. There are buck."

"Can I catch buck with my hands?" he asked.

"There's a rifle," she said, "and ammunition hidden. I can shoot, but not buck. No. I cannot hunt. Fight, yes—I have fought Kaffirs with my man. A Kaffir comes towards you, but a buck runs away. I tried, *meneer,* but it was no good, so I saved the ammunition. It was in my heart that the Lord would send someone. A Rooinek that I could kill, or a Boer who would save us. Had you come three days ago, before I grew so weak, *meneer,* you would be dead. *Ja,* I should have shot you dead as you stood in the door."

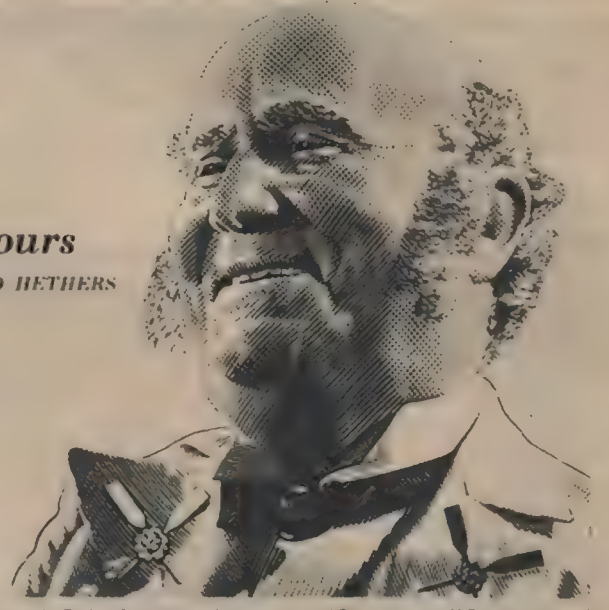
"*Ja,*" he said. "It is the will of the Lord that I did not escape sooner. It would have been a pity if I had been killed."

"*Ja, meneer,* you would be a sad loss. All Africa mourned when we heard you were taken."

"My horse was killed," he said. "A

I wear ***both*** *favours*

says OLD HETHERS



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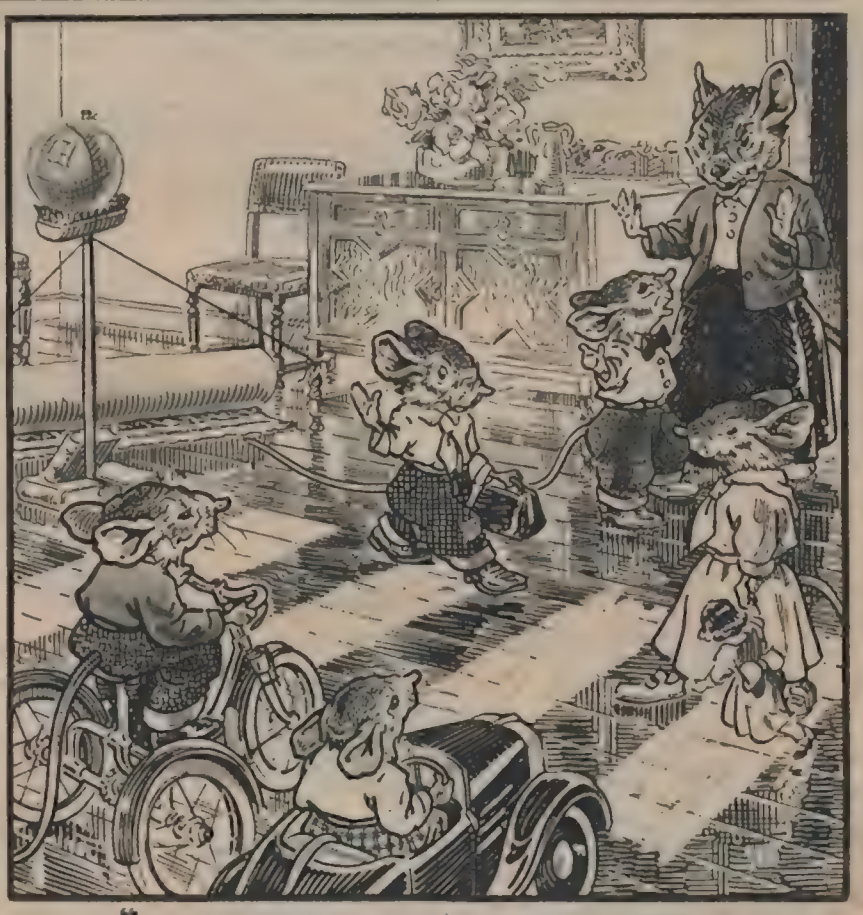

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beautiful horse, a black with a star on his forehead. *Mevrou*, I loved that horse."

"*Ja*," she said.

"Where is the rifle?"

"Here beside me."

The woman rolled back the blankets. He reached down for the gun. She pushed a bandolier towards him.

"Clothes," he said. "I suppose there are no clothes."

"There are clothes. My man's clothes are hidden in a box in a cave in the *kloof*. You see," she said, "I wanted to make it clear that there was no man here, that I was alone. But then when they came, I was afraid. It is his Sunday suit."

"*Ja*," he said. "Then I can burn this uniform. I am going now. I shall come back with meat."

"The Lord protect you," she said.

He found the cave in the *kloof*. He found the box, and changed. It made him laugh to think of himself clean-shaven and in her man's Sunday suit. It was a rusty black, with a long-tailed coat, and there was also a top hat bound with crepe. He slung the bandolier around his shoulder. Jannie Moolman had vanished, or would have as soon as he burned the uniform.

Now for the meat. Less than a mile away, he saw a small herd of springbok. They were grazing quietly. Moving carefully, he got to within three hundred yards, and sitting down, took careful aim and fired. He brought a nice buck down, and, going back for his horse, he put the carcass on the saddle, fastening it with the horse's head rope. He mounted and rode back. It did not take long to dress the meat. Now at least they had food. But the woman and the child must not have too much, starving as they were. He made broth and fed them a few spoonfuls. He kept the fire going and fed them every couple of hours.

NEXT day they were both stronger. The little girl, Sannie, was on her feet again, and her mother could sit up. His plight began to worry her. "You must go on," she said. "We can manage now."

"How can I go on?" he said. "You have food only for two days. Without salt, in this heat, the meat will go bad, even in the shade. No, I will stay and hunt for you until you can travel. Then you must ride my horse, and I will get you into the mountains."

"It will take time," the woman said.

"*Ja*, it will take time," he said. "But we have time. In all the world, time and air and water are the only things that cost nothing. They are the gift of God."

"You are the gift of God, *meneer*," she said.

"I was sent," he said. "It is in my heart that I was sent."

Jacoba de Wet was her name. She had blue eyes and blonde hair and was not more than twenty-five. The child resembled her, was a tiny copy, a miniature, of her mother.

In a week he had them both up. Every day he shot buck and picked wild spinach from the abandoned lands. He found some apricot trees in fruit. He found a guinea fowl's nest with fresh eggs. He trapped small birds for variety and was satisfied with his patients' progress. In a few days now they would be off. Once in the mountains, they would find other people. Women and children and old men living among the rocks like baboons, but free—freedom, that was what counted.

He went to the room where Jacoba de Wet was cooking. She was well enough to do that now. The child was playing beside her. "Well," he said, "two more days and I think we can be off."

"How long will it take us, do you think?"

"Two days," he said. "We should be able to do twenty-five miles a day."

"And you?" she asked. "You will walk?"

"*Ja*, I will walk beside you and the child."

"You are a good man," she said. Then she went on, "My man is dead."

"But you said when I came——"

"I said that because I did not wish to believe he was dead. Those were lies. *Ja*," she said, "he was killed at Modder River. A fine man, he was, a brave man. That is why I wanted to stay. I could have managed, but now——"

"We will find people," he said vaguely.

She suddenly seemed beautiful to him. She had always seemed beautiful, with her blue eyes and blonde hair, but he had put the thought away from him till she had told him of her husband's death. As a hunter he had had to be free, to be able to move swiftly and to take great risks. But now? Anyway, it was too soon to think of such things, but the thought was in his mind. And he had grown to love the child. Besides, what could they do alone?

HE brought wood for the fire, and as he put it down the little girl ran in. "Men are coming. Men on horses!" she said. Jan went to the door. There were men, a detachment of British lancers. They were so near that he could hear the rattle and clash of their equipment. He adjusted his top hat, smoothed down his tail coat, and went to meet them.

A young officer, on a smart strawberry roan mare, rode forward. Very politely Jan took off his hat, put his hand on his stomach, and bowed. "Sir," he said in English, "I never thought to welcome one of your race, but the times change, and I, being a man of perception, change with the times. In the house, in what is left of the house, after the improvements effected by your cavalry, lie a sick woman and a child. They need food. Bread, tea and sugar. Perhaps you can spare her some?"

"You talk English well," the officer complimented him.

"*Ja*," Jan said. "It is my good fortune to be well educated. *Ja, meneer*, I am a very lucky man." He thought of his escape and the fact that Jacoba de Wet had been too sick to shoot him.

"I am going into the house," the officer said. "Corporal Brown, come with me. Bring two men." The corporal came with two troopers. They carried carbines in their hands.

"Enter," Moolman said. "We can offer you little hospitality, partly because you are enemies, but mostly because, as enemies, you have destroyed a poor woman's possessions. But we have water—very fine, clear water with no trace of *brak*."

The officer said nothing.

Jacoba de Wet met them, holding the child by the hand.

"The English are back again, *mevrou*," Jan said.

"So I see. What do they want?"

"What does she say?" the officer said.

"She says: 'What do you want?'"

"We saw smoke," the officer said.

"Smoke to the British is like honey to the bee," Jan said.

"This area is supposed to be cleared."

"*Ja, meneer*, that is one word. Devastated is another."

SEEING the springbok hanging from a nail in the wall, the officer went up to it. "Shot," he said.

"Someone else shot it," Moolman said. "I was lucky enough to find it before the vultures."

"Yes," the officer said. "Someone shot it with that Mauser." He looked at the rifle Jacoba was trying to hide. Then he looked at Jan. "I've seen you before somewhere. Your eyes." He stared at him, looked him up and down. "Five seven," he went on, "slim, dark eyes, talks English well, moustache—but that could be quickly shaved. By God, you're Moolman!" He began to laugh. "Corporal Brown, arrest this man! You are Moolman who escaped! And to think it was a fortnight or so ago I saw you in camp!"

"What discernment, *meneer*! Has the reward been increased? A reward is very flattering."

"You escaped in a British uniform."

"Did I? I wonder where it is? If I did, I mean."

"If we find it, I'll shoot you," the young officer said. He was very fierce now; angry. "Why are you here? You have a horse; you should have been clear away."

"*Ja*," Jan said, "I should have been. But unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, when I got here I found this woman and her child on the point of death. I have been hunting for them. But tomorrow we should have been gone." He looked at the Waterberg again. How far the mountains had receded in this last hour.

"Is this true?" the officer asked.

"It is true."

"Corporal, call De Beer."

De Beer came. He was a Cape Boer, one of those who had gone with the English. "De Beer, question this woman," the officer said.

Jacoba de Wet told her story.

"Is it true?" the officer asked.

"I think it is true. The stories tally and she can speak no English," De Beer said.

"Moolman," the officer said, "I do not like this business; many of us don't. We are soldiers. We do not like burning farms, deporting women and children and stealing stock."

"It is possible that there are good Englishmen," Moolman said. And he thought: this boy, for instance, does not seem so bad, and he is a hunter. Hunters are different, anyway. That angle about the uniform could be a ruse—to give the soldiers something to talk about.

THE officer ignored his remark. Sannie came and stood beside Moolman, clutching his leg in her arms.

"Come outside," the officer said. "If I let you go, will you give me your word not to fight against us again?"

"If you took me, I should not be able to fight, so I will say yes." Sannie had followed him out. He stroked her hair, fondling it the way a man fondles a dog's ears or a horse.

"If this is found out, I shall be courtmartialled," the officer said.

"I understand."

"Very well. I cannot let you go, but you might manage to escape with the woman and the child. You could steal a second horse."

"*Ja*, I could do that."

"And if some rations were left out, you could steal those, too."

"*Meneer*," Moolman said, "I am an expert thief."

"Tonight," the officer said, "I will stable my horse in the house with yours and sleep here myself. I am very tired and shall sleep soundly. The men will camp by the kraal."

"It is a good plan, *meneer*. Can I go and tell Mevrou de Wet?"

"You can go."

He found her cooking some food the soldiers had given her. "Well, Jan," she said, "this is the end."

"No, Jacoba, the beginning. Tonight we shall escape. It is arranged. I shall have horses."

"How?"

"The officer is going to let us go; let us escape."

"Why, Jan?"

"Why? Because he is a good young man and sees in this the finger of God. He is a hunter like me. He is sick of destruction, and perhaps wants to make up for some of the harm he has done. I had to promise to fight no more."

"You promised?"

"*Ja*, Jacoba. I could not have escaped again, and although I would say it to no one else, we are beaten. Honourably beaten. What we have done—a handful of burghers against an empire—has astonished the world, and there it ends. No people could have done more. None in the history of the world has done so much."

"And then?" she asked. "We?"

He said: "We—we will live in the mountains until it is over, and then we shall come back here and I will help you rebuild what has been destroyed."

It was too soon to say more, to tell her of Francina, his old love. It was too soon to say that God had sent her to him, her and Sannie, to replace what had been lost to him so long ago. So he said: "Are you willing, Jacoba?"

"*Ja*, Jan," she said. "In this I see the finger of God, and who am I to turn away when He points?" THE END

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Compost rotation

Some vegetables, such as marrows, need soil rich in plant foods. My way of avoiding elaborate preparation of the bed is to make my compost heap on a different site each year. Ground which has lain under a heap of manure needs little work on it.—R. BUSH, Great Barr, Birmingham.

Double pottage

I am the owner of a small greenhouse where every inch counts. In order to increase the number of seedlings and cuttings I can raise in it, I make a simple "cradle" out of string for some of my flower pots. Then I hang the pots from brass cup-hooks screwed into the woodwork of the greenhouse staging.—B. MATTHEWS, Emmer Green, Reading, Berks.

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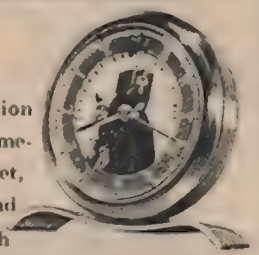

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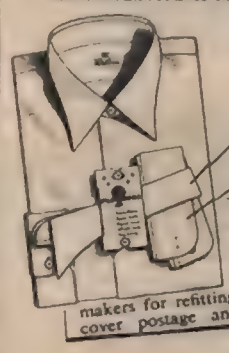

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(210F)

TONIGHT AT TARARA

Continued from page 19

Vera said to Tio. "Ho for a new start, my friend!"

They were all gone in three minutes, and La Sorpresa started back.

They reached the point of embarkation without event just before dawn. Tio paid Manolo his thousand dollars, rowed ashore in the dinghy and drove back to Havana.

Amelia, snug in bed, opened an eye at him, murmured something unintelligible, and closed the eye again. Tio slid under the covers, conforming to the curves of her back, and sighed with pleasure.

Later that day, Tio stopped at police headquarters to see Captain Molina. Now that José Vera was safely in Florida, Tio saw no harm in giving the captain that information and thus getting credit for assisting the police.

The captain was out, but Tio left the word with his assistant. That took care of the police problem satisfactorily. He had not yet decided how to explain his increased wealth to Amelia.

PEPE, Amelia's brother, who, though of little use on earth, was to intercede for them all in heaven, was at the bar when he returned.

"That captain was here to see you," Pepe said. "The one from the Secret Police."

"Ah, Molina."

"He left a note for you." Pepe looked around, his naturally bewildered face becoming more so. "I put it by the cash register. But it is not here."

"Look in your pocket, stupid."

Pepe searched in vain. "Well, I have tried," he stated stubbornly.

"Is there no mind at all!"

"Also, there was another one, but he left no name. He came in twice, the second time swooping like a bat." Pepe demonstrated with his hands.

"Did he leave a message?"

"Yes, he left a message." Several irritated minutes of search were necessary to find it. Pepe had absent-mindedly used it as a bottle stopper. Unrolled, it said: *Tio, I am in trouble. I am leaving dock at once and cannot return. Please meet me tonight where we met the other evening.—Manolo.*

Tio swore softly. It would take him two hours to get to the embarkation beach at Tarara; he would be gone most of the night again. Yet Manolo was a friend. And if Manolo was in trouble, perhaps he, Tio, would also be, if not forewarned. He decided he should go. After a moment's reflection, he took out the thirty-eight hundred dollars and put the bills in the secret compartment behind the drawer of the cash register; at the same time he took from it his automatic pistol. It would be a little difficult to explain his absence to Amelia: one departure was all right, but two would make her suspicious. He'd have to tell her more lies. . . .

Summoning Pepe, he told him merely that he would be away for the evening on business, and left hurriedly.

In a hired car, he made again the uncomfortable trip to Tarara—worse this time because he travelled more rapidly over the pitted road. At the land's end he got out and stood for a moment in a gentle wind, letting his eyes adjust to the darkness. Then he saw that the dinghy had been pulled from its hiding place and was lying at the water's edge.

"*Ola!*" he called.

His answer was the glare of a flashlight in his face and the snapped command, "Put up your hands!" But he could not mistake the soft, tense voice. The innocent night was suddenly alive with danger.

"What goes, my friend?" Tio inquired.

"Turn around."

Tio turned, and Roberto Mendin, switching off the flashlight, clapped a hand over him until he found the gun.

"We have been betrayed. It's not safe to talk here—get in the dinghy and I will tell you."

Tio did so—after all, he had no choice; but he had a sense of evil blowing from this man like a draught of air, chilling his heart.

"You row," said Mendin.

They travelled, the only sound being the rattle of the oars and the slap of the water on the bow.

"You have read the evening paper?" Mendin said.

"Not yet."

"Read it, then." Turning the flashlight on him, Mendin tossed over the newspaper. There was a paragraph stating that at 2 a.m. the previous night the United States Border Patrol had picked up four men, smuggled from Cuba and believed to be Bulgarian Communist agents. A reward of one thousand dollars was mentioned for information received. There was no mention of José Vera.

"They were caught, then," Tio said, trying to think this out, while Mendin watched him, the gun in his hand. "That is a risk one must accept."

"They were betrayed. That is a risk I never accept."

Yes, they were betrayed, Tio thought. They were captured within two hours of landing, while it was still dark. The patrol must have been told where they were—and José Vera had left first. Yes, of course—the one-thousand-dollar reward for information. José had made his new start well.

"Have they paid you yet?" the soft, hate-filled voice asked.

"Believe me, *señor*, it is true, I think now, that they were betrayed, but I did not betray them."

MENDIN tossed him a piece of paper. "There is one more thing for you to read. One last thing." It was the message from Captain Molina, stating simply: *Tio: Thanks for the information on the Florida arrival.*

"This I found on your counter," Mendin said. "I saw the captain leave it. So then I left my message for you. Perhaps you did not believe me when I warned you about the double-cross." His voice sank to little more than a thin steel whisper, in which there was a note of exultation. "You are going to die, Tio."

"These things are not what they seem," Tio began.

"Row on. You row well."

"I can explain——"

"Row on," Mendin ordered, raising his gun. "Or I shall have to kill you here, which is too close to shore."

Tio rowed, and Mendin switched off the light. Tio talked for a while, but he knew it was futile. Perhaps it was his time to die. But the wind was free, the stars smiling, the water out here a lovely green phosphorescence—and

back at home Amelia's arms were soft, and her lips softer. No, from his standpoint it was certainly not the time.

Behind the curtain of his words, his mind was racing this way and that, looking for a door of escape. He pulled the oars slowly, to gain a little time; they churned silver pools in the water, just as on the previous night, when the billfish had flashed across the boat—and suddenly, with this memory, his heart leaped. It was a possibility—with just a little luck. . . .

Tio stopped rowing and fumbled with his hands inside his coat, as if searching for something.

"Put your hands on the oars!" Mendin commanded sharply, turning on the flashlight.

Tio blinked in the light. This was what he wanted, and he had to keep it. He spoke pleadingly. "I look to see if I have money, *señor*. I have none here, but I will pay you well."

"I do not want your money," the gunman replied, "only your blood."

Something hit the side of the boat with a sharp crack.

The gunman sat up. "What is that?"

"It is the billfish," Tio answered. "Cast your light off the side here and you will see them."

Mendin did so, keeping Tio in the fringes of the light. A spear of silver shot across the boat through the light, hissing over the water on the other side. Then another came, straight down the light beam, striking with a "whup." Mendin gasped, the flashlight wavered, and Tio dived for the gun. He was prepared to hear the explosion and feel the shock of the bullet, but Mendin's right arm dropped and the gun slipped from his hand. Tio grabbed it and fired, just as Mendin clubbed the back of his head with the flashlight in the other hand. Dazed for a moment, Tio held himself on his hands and knees, while Mendin toppled sideways against the gunwale, the billfish quivering madly in his right shoulder, its bill several inches through his back.

Tio pulled it out and tossed it overboard, murmuring gratefully, "Little friend, you deserve to live."

The bullet had gone upward through Roberto Mendin's throat. The man was dead. It was no loss to the world, especially in view of the alternative. Tio tied the anchor to the legs, pushed the body into the sea, and rowed home.

IT was after midnight and the Café Mosca was closed behind its shutters. Tio stopped at the cash register, took out some notes and went upstairs. Amelia was sitting up in bed, her rosy shoulders bare, her dark hair mussed a little, her black eyes with a warning glint in them.

"You are beautiful at this hour," Tio said. "It is worth waiting for."

"You seem to have waited quite a while," Amelia snapped. "You steal off with no word to me. You return after midnight. Doubtless you have broken your promise and gone back to your underworld friends."

"It is only the José Vera matter," Tio replied soothingly.

"That's what you said before."

"Ah, but this was to finish it. I was able to tell the police that José Vera was in the United States. They were grateful for the information. Look!" He handed her fifteen hundred dollars. This was as much of the total sum as he could explain, and it was enough for their holiday, so he was clearly in order in withholding the rest. "For your holiday, star of my heart."

Amelia gasped, her defences broken. "Oh, Tio! Is it truly ours? Are the police so generous?"

"Sometimes we misjudge them," Tio observed magnanimously.

Amelia pulled him down to her and hugged him.

"And sometimes I misjudge you!" she cried. "I was worried, Tio. Always I fear that you will tire of restaurant keeping and return to the old ways. But you are happy with this life of ours, are you not, truly?"

"At this moment," Tio murmured into the soft curve of her shoulder, "life is sweeter to me than it has ever been."

THE END

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Fully equipped including dynamo lighting, taxed, insured, tank filled ready for the road.

Value **£107** *each*

12 PRIZES OF

BSA 'GOLD VASE' BICYCLES

The outstanding sports bicycle in colour complete with 3-speed gear, holdall bag, all accessories, etc. (Alternative choice: any other type of B.S.A. bicycle of equal value.)

Value **£21** *each*

and up to 100 Consolation Prizes of £1 Postal Orders.

HOW TO ENTER THIS COMPETITION

If you use Easy Shaving Stick

First, buy an EASY Shaving Stick (either Gibbs, or as it was formerly known, Lever's) costing 11d. Tear off top of carton and attach to your completed entry form. Write, in no more than 15 words, a snappy slogan or advertisement for Gibbs Easy Shaving Stick. Here are examples: 1. An Easy shave a day keeps dark shadows away. 2. Where shaving's concerned it's Easy to please. These points about Gibbs Easy may help you . . . Economical—good for 100 shaves. Gives a quicker lather. Gets beard softer, so shaving is easier. Provides closer shaves—face stays smooth longer. Leaves skin comfortable.

USE THIS

If you use the New Gibbs Lather Shaving Cream

First buy a tube of Gibbs Lather Cream. Tear off the printed end flap from carton and attach to your completed entry form. Write in no more than 15 words a snappy slogan or advertisement for Gibbs Lather Shaving Cream. Here are examples: 1. Gibbs Shaving Cream smooths your face, soothes your skin. 2. Gibbs has HC.7 for skin protection, so every shave improves your complexion. Details printed on the carton or tube may help you.

OR THIS

Don't worry about handwriting—here are points the judges will look for:—Aptness of presenting selling points for Gibbs Easy Shaving Stick or Gibbs Lather Shaving Cream, and the skill, forcefulness and originality shown in the idea submitted. Of course, you may send in as many attempts as you wish. Write them on an entry form or a plain sheet of paper, but remember—a separate carton top or printed end flap with each entry please.

And by the way, here's a useful point. Two or three heads are better than one so bring in the help of the family when you search for that brilliant idea. Mother, father, sister, brother—that girl friend of yours—any one of them might give you that extra bit of inspiration that will put you in the prize-winning class! **NOTE: The contest closes on April 13th, 1953, so enter NOW.**

READ THESE RULES CAREFULLY

1—Anyone over 16 years of age and resident in Great Britain or Northern Ireland may enter except employees (and their families) of D. & W. Gibbs Limited and their advertising agents.

2—A Competitor may send in as many entries as he wishes, provided each entry is made on a separate entry form and each is accompanied by a carton top or a printed end flap. He may use (a) the entry form below or (b) an entry form from his Gibbs or B.S.A. dealer, or (c) a plain piece of paper on which he must print *all* the information required on the official entry form, including the statement "I have read and agreed to abide by the rules of this competition", after which he must write his signature.

3—The entry form must be completed and posted with a carton top of Gibbs or Lever's Easy Shaving Stick or a printed end flap from a Gibbs Lather Shaving Cream carton to: **Gibbs Competition (Dept.J.B. 2) Melbourne House, Aldwych, London, W.C.2** and arrive not later than **April 13th, 1953.**

4—Every entry will be judged by a panel of independent judges and prizes will be awarded in order of merit to the competitors whose efforts show the greatest merit.

5—No competitor may win more than one prize. Cash value of prizes may be taken in lieu if desired.

6—In the event of a tie or ties the cash value of prizes will be divided.

7—The judges' decision will be final and legally binding.

8—The judges will include: an advertising manager of a famous company; a leading advertising writer; an editor of a well-known publication; a publicity expert; and Kenneth Horne.

9—No entries will be returned and no correspondence will be entered into in connection with this competition. No responsibility will be accepted by D. & W. Gibbs Limited for entries lost, delayed, mislaid, or damaged.

10—The copyright of all entries will belong to D. & W. Gibbs Limited.

11—All prize winners will be notified by post. Any competitor wishing to receive a full list of prize winners should enclose a stamped addressed envelope with his entry.

ENTRY FORM *To:* GIBBS COMPETITION (Dept.JB 2) Melbourne House, Aldwych, London, W.C.2

Write your slogan or advertisement (not more than 15 words) in the space below in block capitals.

.....

.....

.....

COMPETITOR'S NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

I have read and agreed to abide by the rules of this competition.

Competitor's Signature .....

Date ..... E 466-455

Write below the name and address of the dealer where you bought your Easy Shaving Stick or Gibbs Lather Shaving Cream.

.....

.....

.....

I LEARN TO LIVE IN TWILIGHT

Continued from page 9

have to look above, below, or to one side of it. Thus I should not be able to read, or see anything clearly. I would never be "black-blind," and after a time the eyes would settle down and I might go on like that for many years before there was a recurrence.

Retinal haemorrhage is almost unknown in one of my age—fifty-two. The cause in my case is a hereditary defect in the walls of the blood vessels. My mother had been blind from a totally different cause, but a tendency to eye trouble was probably transmitted. Twelve years before, I had almost died from the bursting of a large blood vessel at the base of the skull. There was no obvious reason for it—it just happened.

In the old, retinal haemorrhage is less rare, and it seldom has such a damaging effect on the sight. It arises from a quite different cause: the breakage may happen when high blood pressure and brittle blood vessels combine in the same person.

The specialist prescribed a drug which, he said, might arrest further breakage of the capillaries, but he warned me not to hope for much. Six weeks later I went back. All the tests were made again, and the black-headed pins showed that the field of vision in each eye was appreciably smaller. The drug had had no effect. The specialist said he wanted a second opinion.

I Was Used To The Idea

He took me to a London eye hospital, to see his colleague, Mr. G., who was a medical specialist. All the same questions were asked, and more, and all the same examinations were made. Then Mr. G. asked me to allow one of his students to look at me. I had nothing to complain about, for my student was an agreeable young woman, and it was by no means a hardship to sit for ten minutes while she looked through the ophthalmoscope, her hand on my shoulder and her face six inches from mine.

At last it was over, and I was taken back to the surgeon. It was no surprise to hear that Mr. G. confirmed his diagnosis. I had had six weeks to get used to the idea, and I felt like begging him not to look so glum at having, as he thought, to dash all my hopes.

So far, I had told no one, but now arrangements would have to be made. My first concern was for my work. I had been with my firm for twenty-one years, for the last three as head. I thought that I had the business fairly well fixed in my mind. The chairman

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*

was very understanding and decided that for the time being, as I could still read, he would say nothing to the board. I told a few of the senior staff at the office. They, too, were kind, and I was touched by their support.

It was obviously necessary for me to get all the practice I could against the day, not far ahead, when I should no longer be able to read. I stopped reading at once and had everything read to me. This involved an adaptation of the memory from things seen to things heard, which came very quickly. I found that I could even remember figures—enough of them, at any rate, to appreciate the significance of a financial statement.

So in a few weeks I began to gain confidence in myself: I felt I could hold down the job. The chairman agreed that the board should be told, and in the end it was decided that I should stay where I was. For my part I undertook to tell my employers at once if I felt unequal to the task.

This was a year ago, and even now a large number of the staff still do not know that the boss cannot read. I have grown cunning in deception, but I am sometimes nearly caught when someone hands me a paper, saying, "What do you think of this?" It is my duty, at the annual meeting, to read the notice convening the meeting. This is easy. It is quite short and I learn it by heart. The shareholders have no idea that I am reciting, not reading.

Life is not quite the same outside the office—there are no kind people perpetually around to help with any difficulty that may arise. Blind people should not live alone if they can help it, but none of my troubles is serious.

Crossing the road can be a nightmare, so I go out of my way to use traffic lights. Zebra crossings are a blessing, for others congregate there and one can go with the crowd. I have been taken over the road by hundreds of people who had no idea they were doing me a service. The perfect companion across the road is a pram, and the next best is a dog on a lead; they both inspire great confidence.

Travelling is easy enough, provided that the journey is familiar. My station on the London Underground is the first one after the tube emerges into the open air. By day there is a change in the light as the train comes out of the tunnel, and by night a totally different noise. It would be impossible to make a mistake.

Elsewhere, unless I count the stations, I have to ask where I am, though there are some unmistakable landmarks. Piccadilly is easily recognized by its fluorescent lighting, as is Sloane Square. Earls Court gives the impression of a huge, gloomy vault. A bus journey—provided that I know the route—gives no trouble, for I can see enough to recognize buildings.

A stick or an umbrella is essential. With it no staircase presents the slightest difficulty; without it I should have to crawl. So far I have held back from the white walking-stick for a variety of reasons: my degree of blindness does not really entitle me to more than a grey one; I feel shy about displaying my disability and it amuses me to pretend that I am like other men.

Shopping, except for branded goods, is difficult, though the assistants are invariably helpful. I can distinguish between a shilling and a halfpenny, and a half-crown and a penny, by the slight difference in size and by the milled edge. Though this works, it makes me very slow, much to the fury of those behind me in a queue. When I was still a learner I once gave a bus conductress two half-crowns for a twopenny ticket. "The fare hasn't gone up that much, dear," she said. "Not yet, anyway."

A Place For Everything

At home things are quite easy, except when anything is lost, or is put back in an unaccustomed place. Anyone who has much to do with the blind soon learns that every object in the house must always be exactly where it belongs. For the totally blind, that place must be precise to the very inch—the cigarettes, the ashtray, the matches, everything on the dinner table. It has often taken me five minutes to find something which stood in full view—but not my view—because it was not where I expected it to be.

Every man would shave much more effectively if mirrors were removed from bathrooms. How easy it is to overlook that slightly rough patch where the razor has failed to do its work properly; how impossible to miss it if the fingers of the free hand follow behind the razor!

The improvement in my shaving, however, is counter-balanced by the impossibility of deciding whether the white collar will stand another day. This is one of the penalties of living alone. Another is that if I have to ring up someone whose number I have not memorized I have to get it from Directory Inquiries—or ring up a friend who will look it up for me, which doubles the cost of telephoning.

It took a long time to learn how to use a dial. My conversations with unknown subscribers were often so enjoyable that I was left wondering whether I had rightly dialled the wrong number or wrongly dialled the right number. But now I can dial accurately—almost as fast as anyone else.

During recent years my pleasures had been entirely visual. No games

Do not send cash unless registered. Cross postal orders or cheques. Keep counterfoils of P.O.s.

JOHN BULL'S SHOP WINDOW
BARGAINS BY POST

When ordering, write clearly your name and full postal address — in block letters or delay may result.

Genuine SEAMLESS Carpet Squares

Carpeting costs are a problem, these attractive squares will save you at least 70%. In cols.: **Rust, Green, Brown, Blue, Wine, Fawn, Grey, Old Rose.** Sizes Approx.: 3 × 2 yds. **84/10/-**; 3 × 2½ yds. **85/12/6**; 3 × 3 yds. **86/15/-**; 3 × 3½ yds. **87/17/6**; 3 × 4 yds. **89**; 3 × 4½ yds. **$10/2/6**; 3 × 5 yds. **$11/5/-**. Add 2/6 post., pack. & carr. on each square. Samples of squares and carpeting sent 1/- post free. Refunded if returned.
RIDGWAY STORES (J88), MANCHESTER, 1

SHEDS (6' x 4') from £11 . 6 . 0 or 45/- deposit including 250 miles free lorry delivery.
GARDEN SHEDS
GARAGES AND GREENHOUSES
Prompt despatch—Satisfaction Guaranteed. Write today for FREE CATALOGUE. Please state building required.
J. THORN & SONS LTD.
Box 5, Brampton Road, Bexleyheath, Kent.
Tel: Bexleyheath 305 Est. 1896

Inexpensive Lovely & Hardwearing CARPET SQUARES

A LOUNGE 9 ft. × 9 ft. only costs £6 . 10 . 0
Fine quality felted needleloom carpeting made up into squares of any size. Colours: blue, green, wine, brick, nigger, fawn, heather, etc.
SEND SIZE & WE WILL QUOTE
Also available in widths for runners, fitted carpets, stairways, halls, etc.
18 in. .. 7/6 27 in. .. 11/-
36 in. .. 14/6 54 in. .. 21/-
Price per yard Carriage free.
SEND 1/- FOR SAMPLES (Refundable)
LANCASHIRE CARPETING
PRESTO SUPPLIES (PRESTON)
(Dept. J.B.5.5), Rye Street Mill, Preston, Lancs.

SUEDE FINISH
PERMAPELMET
PATENT ADJUSTABLE
WOOD PELMET
Easily adjusted to fit any straight or bay window. Fixed in a few minutes. Made of selected timber with the new Suede Finish in lovely colours: IVORY, BISCUIT, OLD GOLD, GREEN, BLUE, ROSE, RUST, GOLDEN BROWN. Also Matt Finish for home painting.
From **25/-** Complete
For full details and sample of Suede Finish, send stamped addressed envelope stating colour preferred.
JAMES HEWETT (Desk 27)
122 High Street, Staines, Middlesex

THOUSANDS SAVE £.s.d. WITH
ANALOOM
fitted floor covering
In 8 lovely shades. Contains hair and wool for hard wear and has original Brown, Non-slip, Rubberized Back. 2 Qualities.
STANDARD GRADE (for Surrounds, etc.), 18 in. 6/9 yd., 27 in. 9/11, 36 in. 13/6, 54 in. 19/9, 72 in. 27/9.
SUPER GRADE (for Carpet Squares and Fitted Carpeting), 18 in. 9/6 yd., 27 in. 14/-, 36 in. 18/8, 54 in. 27/11, 72 in. 37/4. All Carriage Free!
FREE Samples! Send for yours now, or send for a TEST NON-SLIP MAT 36 in. x 12 in. only 5/- (Super Grade 6/11). Post Free.
ANALOOM WAREHOUSE CO. LTD.
281 Stockport Road, MANCHESTER, 12 (J.B.1)

NEW FEET
INSTANT RELIEF from metatarsal troubles* and fallen arches. No more pain. No tired feet. Soft and resilient Omnipeds make walking a real pleasure. Full satisfaction guaranteed. State sh size. Post & packing 5d.
*Symptoms: Pain or hard skin under forepart of foot.

6'11 PER PAIR
International Foot Appliances Ltd.
(Dept. J.B.141), 92 Baker Street, London, W.1

SMOKE & SAVE
FRAGRANT, SATISFYING
DE LUXE
HERBAL SMOKING MIXTURE
For cigarettes—enough for 72 full size cigarettes, and packet of papers, 1/7d.
For pipes, 6 oz. packet, 2/11d. 4 packets, 11/1d. Post free direct from Blenders. Send for complete Herbal list.
LUSTY'S
NATURAL PRODUCTS CO.
WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA, ESSEX

14 Days FREE TRIAL

The FAMOUS **REMINGTON CONTOUR 6** Electric Dry Shaver for only **20/- Deposit**
Six Diamond-honed Heads to fit every type of beard. Fully Suppressed, Highly Efficient Motor. 210/250 volts A.C./D.C. In Presentation Case. Cash £8.19.5 or 20/- Deposit and 8 Monthly Payments of 21/-. Deposit refunded if not approved.
J. A. DAVIS & CO. (Dept. J.B.9)
94-104 DENMARK HILL, LONDON, S.E.5

AMAZING SHEET OFFER

SHEETS 11/3 per pair
Postage and packing 1/3
Entire bankrupt stock of pure white, single bed, quality sheets, 54 in. × 80 in. Limited quantity, secure today.
STRAND SURPLUS SUPPLIES CO.
(DEPT. J.B.) 3 HONOR OAK PARK, LONDON, S.E.23

WHY WAIT!
You can be independent on an Excelsior
For work or pleasure the AUTOBYK is ideal. It will carry you where you like, when you like, and you arrive as lively as you started.
SAVES FARES
SAVES TIME
SAVES ENERGY
AUTOBYK
An AUTOBYK can be yours for as little as 12/6d. per week.
The AUTOBYK is a most economical machine, and for effortless, independent travel is unbeatable. It is simple to use and is as safe as riding a bicycle.

Ask for Booklet J.6 Sent POST FREE
THE EXCELSIOR MOTOR CO. LTD.,
Kings Road, Tyseley, Birmingham, 11

had made the faintest appeal to me, least of all cards. Art had become my main interest. The cinema, too, would have to go, but I was by no means a "regular."

The theatre need not go—as I soon found out. The loss of stage effects, scenery and the movement of the actors does not matter much, if the programme is thoroughly absorbed and the blind person can be given beforehand some idea of what the play is about. The real impact of many plays is on the ear. The eye completes the illusion, it is true, but a blind playgoer misses very little.

I have more books than I can comfortably house, for reading has been my lifelong interest. This was, I thought, going to be the greatest deprivation of all. Even had there been anyone to do it, reading aloud would not have been a complete substitute. No reader could have satisfied my greedy appetite.

To add to this I was a crossword fiend. I filled my evenings by reading, and I had the quite mistaken idea that it was impossible to go to sleep unless I had first read for at least an hour. Altogether, a formidable number of hours, once spent in reading, would have to be filled in some other way.

From The Eye To The Ear

Music was the obvious answer—a turning from the pleasures of the eye to those of the ear. But I had never troubled much about it and had seldom been to a concert. I would have found it difficult to name half a dozen composers. Then I remembered that once, in my unregenerate youth, I had never looked at a picture. I remembered how my interest had started, and how it had grown. Why should it not be the same with music, I asked myself, and, indeed, so it was.

I got rid of the antique radio set which I rarely switched on, and bought a good one. I bought the latest three-speed gramophone. I bought records. A generous friend made me the loan of a fine collection. I went to the Albert Hall and to the Festival Hall. I began to meet musical people and to find that many of my friends were musical.

Radio and the gramophone, even when used to the full, cannot fill all the time formerly spent in reading. There remained Braille. Learning it, and then reading it, took as much time as I had left.

I am one of the lucky ones. My world is grey, not black. Although after a year I am still losing sight, it is so slow as to be imperceptible. I can still see a great deal: the bus, but not its number; the figure, but not the face.

Thousands of people conquer total blindness; only they know exactly how. My short experience of partial blindness—a deprivation but certainly not a disability—has taught me much, not least that other things come to compensate for what is lost. THE END

LIFE WITH FATHER

Here is the missing person from the photograph on page 22. The boy is Arthur (now Lord Baden-Powell), seen with his world-famous father, founder of the Boy Scout movement.

PRIZES value over £1,000 including TV and CORONATION CAKES!

TWENTY-TWO JOHN BULL readers now enjoy television with sets won in *Bullets*. "Words cannot express how delighted I am with my prize!" says one of them, Mrs. P. Dunford (39 Windsor Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth)—you see her here with the elegant set she chose to accompany her *Bullets* cheque.

This week, another TV set goes with the £500 fortune *you* can win for a *Bullet*. It can be installed in time to give you a grandstand Cup Final "seat" and, later, provide historic Coronation viewing. Post off your *Bullets* coupon by TUESDAY, April 7—and why not enclose an entry for that £100 Crossword?

"Bullets" Prizes value over

£800

£500 1st PRIZE PLUS TELEVISION SET

From your dealer's stock *you* choose any TV model costing up to £75—JOHN BULL pays the bill for it! (Extra cheque in lieu if preferred.)

1,569 OTHER PRIZES

£50, £25, £10, £9, £8, £7, £6, 2 of £5, 10 of £2.10s.

50 "Bullets" Season Tickets

1,500 "Use-as-you-choose" Awards

FINE FOWL BONUSES

A fine roasting fowl accompanies each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

HOW TO WIN

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

Cricketer John
The Stalin Story
Seeds Of Suspicion
Coming To Britain
The Crown Jewels
Moving With The Times
It's A Gamble, But
One Of The Aristocracy
A Raw Deal
Wooing The Customer
On The Inside
Empty
King Of Liars
She Thinks
Made His Fortune
Going Gay
Garge's Sow
Restless And Bored
Pounced On
Upset Little Lionel

Incomplete "Examples" —see Instructions

At The.....Meeting
Sleepytown's.....
With A Few.....
Didn't Deceive.....
Frightfully.....
"You.....It, Daddy!"

NOTE. You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in the same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

"Bullets" Winners 1,874

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Television: L. V. T. Preater, 10 Woodbank Road, Leicester:

Alone And Unarmed Man Crosses *Last* "Frontier"

£50: T. Graham, 14 Bolney Street, New Springs, Wigan: TRYING TO WEED—PEACE GARDEN, "UNBENDING" MEN?

£25: E. R. Russell, 54 Franche Road, Kidderminster: A BIT TOO MUCH—GRUMBLING *And* GAMBLING—COINCIDENCE?

OTHER AWARDS: £10: H. O. Thompson, 12 Hollywood Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne: ON SUNDAYS—"THOSE HEATHENS!"—"THOSE HYPOCRITES!" £9: Rev. G. W. M. Laurence, 65 Victoria Road, Maldon, Essex: TRUE DEMOCRACY—*All* WEARING RESPONSIBILITY'S "CROWN." £8: Mrs. C. Cansfield, 27 Park Avenue, Thackley, Bradford: HAD BETTER BE PREPARED—FOR *Friendly* RUSSIA, TOO! £7: J. B. Beggs, 73 Hillmount Gardens, Finaghy, Belfast: WHAT THE HENS DID—WHILE EGGS *Controlled*—PUZZLING! £6: J. Anderton, 4 Bramley Avenue, Fleetwood, Lancs: SPRING, THE TONIC—"WARMING"—BUT DON'T UNWRAP! £5: Miss M. Macdonald, Mount Alexander, Comber, Co. Down: IN AN IDEAL WORLD—ANCESTORS WISTFULLY PICTURED *Us*! £5: F. Roberts, 23 Clumber Road, Gorton, Manchester: WHAT THE DIVIDEND DID—PAID FOR DAD'S *Aspirins*!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. Winners of 50 Coronation Souvenirs and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been notified.

MORE **CORONATION SEATS** for "John Bull" readers—

GRAND OFFER NEXT WEEK!

CASH AND CORONATION CAKES

This Way To Win

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues — XWORD 831

1. If you do this for money you will probably be disappointed more often than not
5. A man in this is likely to be sullen, resentful
6. Usually doesn't mean so much to real amateur player
10. Away from cities and big towns such a road is more frequent
13. Can help the gardener in many ways
14. If it won't wash, it's not so good

Down Clues

1. You generally get this in local horticultural shows
2. See you don't get a hard one on the corporation
3. Can be very discouraging if it's too short to be effective
4. Navvy isn't likely to get through his work so quickly without
7. One might possibly be mistaken in thinking a particular cat to be
8. What knowledge can be
9. Some people complain that more and more these are helping to spoil our beautiful countryside
11. A butcher is not characteristically this
12. Deep one takes some fathoming

£100 FIRST PRIZE

AWARDS VALUE £25 among 1st Runners-up

CORONATION CAKES

All winners of prizes value £1 and over will receive, shortly before Coronation Day, an ICED and richly ornamented CELEBRATION CAKE.

Up to 300 "SIGNPOST" PRIZES —one for each 2nd Runner-up

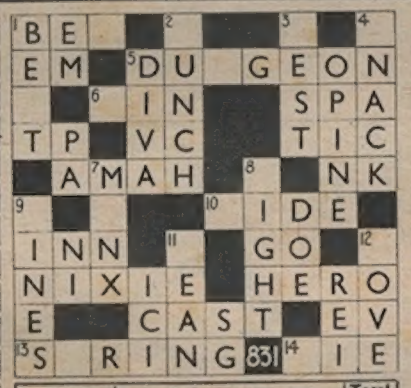
XWORD 826 RESULT

WINNING WORDS, ACROSS: 1, Brawny. 4, Birth. 6, Fool. 11, Glass. 12, Peg. 13, Talk. 14, Clock. DOWN: 1, Blend. 2, Prim. 3, That. 5, Cop. 7, Arts. 8, Pose. 9, Flank. 10, Zest.

TWO £100 SHARERS: Mrs. K. Black, 129 Longridge Road, Preston, Lancs; W. Jones, 20 Sunnyside Gardens, Upminster. Winners also receive Coronation Cakes.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 38 entrants. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

CORONATION CAKES EXCLUSIVELY for XWORDS



1 B	E		■	2		■	3		■	4				
E	M	■	5 D	U		G	E	O	N					
	■	6	I	N	■	■	S	P	A					
T	P	■	V	C	■	■	T	I	C					
■	A	7 M	A	H	■	8	■	N	K					
9	■		■	■	10	I	D	E	■					
I	N	N	■	11	■	G	O	■	12					
N	I	X	I	E	■	H	E	R	O					
E	■	■	C	A	S	T	■	E	V					
13 S		R	I	N	G	831	14	I	E					

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

Puzzle and form strictly copyright **831** Special Easter Closing Postmark TUES., APR. 7

I enclose P.O. value ..... No. .....

Signed .....

Address .....

.....

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.).

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated April 18.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

POST ENTRY by EASTER TUESDAY to:

"Bullets" 1,879 (or Xword 831), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

EXAMPLE ..... 6d.

BULLET

EX. ..... 6d.

B.

EX. ..... 6d.

B.

EX. ..... } EXTRA TWO FOR 6d.

B.

EX. ..... }

B.

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O. value..... No.....

Signed.....

Address.....

.....

.....

1,879 Special Easter Closing Postmark TUES., APR. 7

CORONATION SEATS—SECURE YOUR "BULLETIN"!

For practical help with *Bullets* and Crosswords, stick 2½d. stamp on right—this brings you *Bulletin* and Gazette dated April 18. **692**

STICK 2½d. STAMP here for "*Bulletin*"

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated April 25, and in JOHN BULL dated May 2), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, April 18, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,879 result.)

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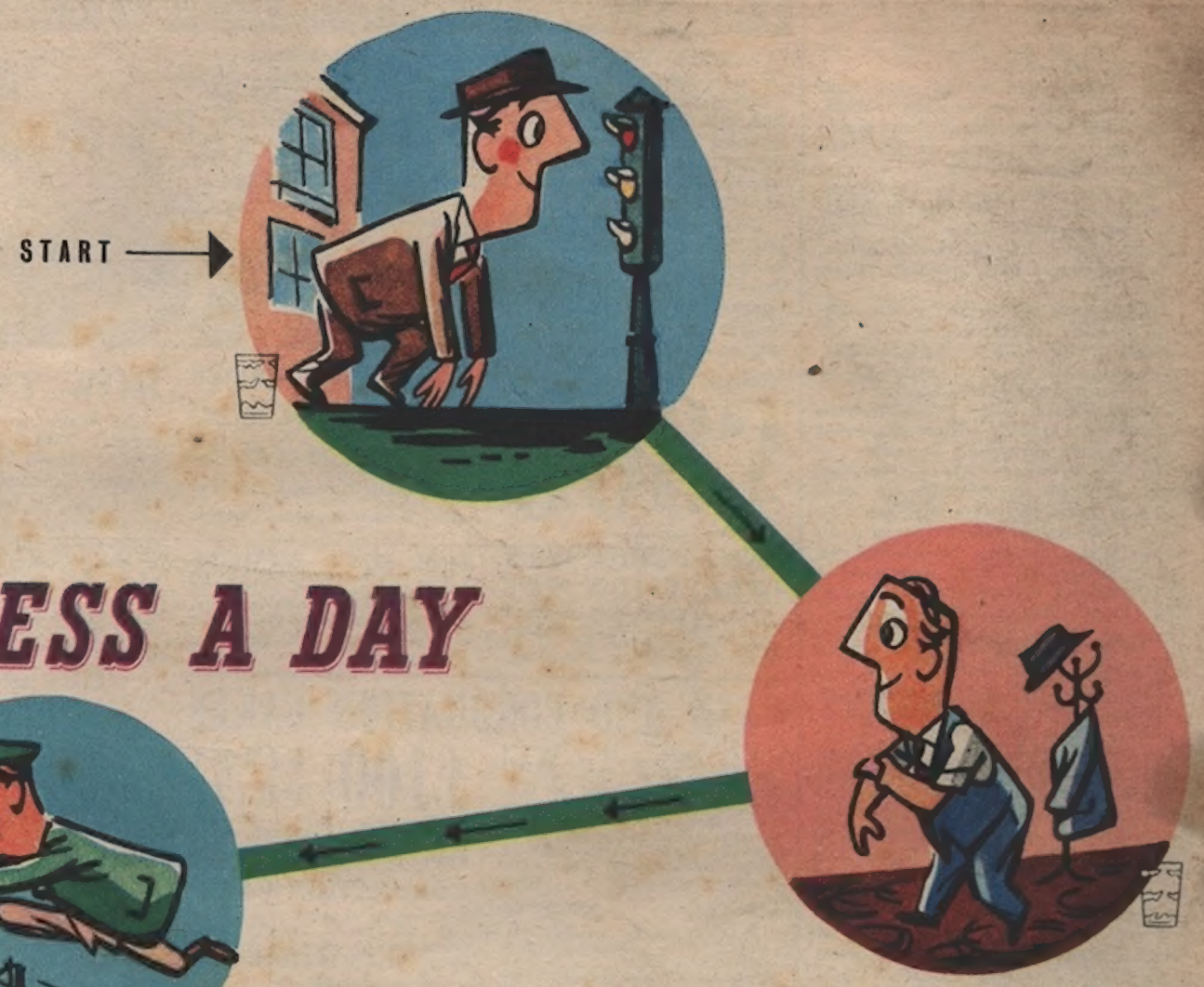

A GUINNESS A DAY

Monday's Guinness makes you strong,
Tuesday's helps the week along;
Wednesday's soothes you when you're tired,
Thursday's — well-earned, much desired;
Friday's glass is full of cheer,
Saturday, the weekend's here,
When you can enjoy at leisure
Guinness Goodness, Guinness pleasure.

HOW GOOD FOR YOU!

(G.E. 2076)